CANADIAN THESES ON MICROFICHE

I.S.B.N.

THESES CANADIENNES SUR MICROFICHE

National Library of Canada
Collections Development Branch

Canadian Theses on
Microfiche Service

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada
Direction du développement des collections

Service des thèses canadiennes
sur microfiche

NOTICE

The quality of this microfiche is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us a poor photocopy.

Previously copyrighted materials (journal articles, published tests, etc.) are not filmed.

Reproduction in full or in part of this film is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30. Please read the authorization forms which accompany this thesis.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microfiche dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de mauvaise qualité.

Les documents qui font déjà l'objet d'un droit d'auteur (articles de revue, examens publiés, etc.) ne sont pas microfilmés.

La reproduction, même partielle, de ce microfilm est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30. Veuillez prendre connaissance des formules d'autorisation qui accompagnent cette thèse.

THIS DISSERTATION
HAS BEEN MICROFILMED
EXACTLY AS RECEIVED

LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ
MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE
NOUS L'AVONS REÇUE

NL-339 (r. 82/08)

Canada

0-315-09057-X

National Library of Canada | Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

Canadian Theses Division | Division des thèses canadiennes

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

175

56974

PERMISSION TO MICROFILM — AUTORISATION DE MICROFILMER

• Please print or type — Écrire en lettres moulées ou dactylographier

Full Name of Author — Nom complet de l'auteur

Mavis Agatha Wisdom Limsden

Date of Birth — Date de naissance	Country of Birth — Lieu de naissance
17 March 1933	Jamaica

Permanent Address — Résidence fixe

152 Castlegrove Blvd
London, Ontario
N6G 3T4

Title of Thesis — Titre de la thèse

JOHN Stuart MILL: CHAMPION OF Women's Rights

University — Université

ALBerta, EDMONTON

Degree for which thesis was presented — Grade pour lequel cette thèse fut présentée

M.A.

Year this degree conferred — Année d'obtention de ce grade	Name of Supervisor — Nom du directeur de thèse
SPRING 1982	Prof. R.D. McMaster

Permission is hereby granted to the NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.

L'autorisation est, par la présente, accordée à la BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DU CANADA de microfilmer cette thèse et de prêter ou de vendre des exemplaires du film.

L'auteur se réserve les autres droits de publication; ni la thèse ni de longs extraits de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans l'autorisation écrite de l'auteur.

Date	Signature
24 November 1981	Mavis Agatha Wisdom Limsden

NL-91 (4/77)

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

JOHN STUART MILL: CHAMPION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

by

© Mavis Agatha Wisdom-Lumsden

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

Department of English

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING, 1982

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR Mavis Agatha Wisdom Lumsden

TITLE OF THESIS John Stuart Mill: Champion of Women's Rights

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED Master of Arts

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED 1982

Permission is hereby granted to THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA LIBRARY to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.

(Signed) Mavis A Wisdom Lumsden

PERMANENT ADDRESS:
152 Castlegrove Blvd.
London, Ontario
Canada N6G 3T6

DATED 20 November 1981

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled John Stuart Mill: Champion of Women's Rights submitted by Mavis Agatha Wisdom Lumsden in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

R. D. M. Masters
Supervisor
R. F. Anderson
Patricia E. Pierrich

Date November 20, 1981

ABSTRACT

John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) was a civil servant, a social reformer, a philosopher, a political economist, a parliamentarian, an author, and an amateur botanist. His passion for individual freedom, and justice in society, inspired him to dedicate his life as a champion for the rights of women. Throughout his life, Mill wrote, both privately and publicly, his views on the status of women, but his writings on this subject are scattered among all his works and letters, some still to be found only in periodicals or as newspaper articles. Only his definitive text, The Subjection of Women, remains as a separate entity.

The purpose of this study is to show the enormous amount of work Mill did on behalf of women, by gathering together under one heading, according to dates, all of Mill's available writings on the subject of women's rights. It is my intention to maintain a fairly strict chronological order, so that the progress of Mill's thoughts on the topic, and the variety and nature of the issues he confronted on behalf of women, might be easily observable. The chronological order will, of course, be broken where rigid adherence creates too obvious an effect of fragmentation. Also, the letters and articles will be

presented as summaries rather than in their entirety, some of them being extremely long.

Chapter One is a basic outline of some of the influential factors which operated on John Stuart Mill during his childhood and early adulthood to foster his intense interest in, and work on, the social problems of women.

Chapter Two gives a biographical description of Mill's writings and letters that deal with the various social concerns of women. It attempts to portray the untiring effort expended in trying to correct the numerous injustices that women encountered constantly because of having neither legal nor social protection.

Chapter Three is a descriptive and critical analysis of Mill's most damning essay, The Subjection of Women, in which he systematically and logically discusses the traditional and contemporary arguments that men have used to justify keeping women in subjection, thereby allowing them neither personal nor public rights, nor opportunity for self determination.

Chapter Four is an examination of some of the reactions to Mill's views on the subjection of women, with special attention to the social, political, or economic biases which determine these criticisms.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to my parents for instilling in me the desire for self improvement and to my husband for his love, understanding, and immeasurable patience, and for his unstinting moral and practical support.

I would also like to thank my supervisor Dr. R.D. McMaster for his patient and understanding guidance, and Dr. R.F. Anderson for his criticism and support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	EARLY INFLUENCES WHICH CONDITIONED MILL'S INTEREST IN, AND WORK ON, THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF WOMEN	1
II.	MILL'S INTEREST IN, AND WORK ON THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF WOMEN	18
III.	A DESCRIPTIVE CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SUBJECTION OF WOMEN	90
IV.	CRITICISM OF THE SUBJECTION OF WOMEN	120
	CONCLUSION	147
NOTES		
	CHAPTER ONE	154
	CHAPTER TWO	157
	CHAPTER THREE	167
	CHAPTER FOUR	170
	CONCLUSION	173
BIBLIOGRAPHY		174

***

CHAPTER ONE

EARLY INFLUENCES WHICH CONDITIONED MILL'S INTEREST IN, AND WORK ON, THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF WOMEN

> If I could be Providence for the world for a time, for the express purpose of raising the condition of women, I would come to you to know the means--.[1]

The glowing tribute to John Stuart Mill from Harriet Taylor might appear excessive, and even outrageous, to those who are unconvinced of Mill's enormous contribution to the quest for improvement in the social, political, and economic conditions of women. I think, however, that this is a fitting compliment to a man who dedicated his life to champion the cause of women from his earliest years, and who continued in this pursuit until his death. It is difficult to say exactly when Mill first became conscious of his concerns for the status of women or even whether his dedication was conscious or unconsciously motivated. Many personal, familial, and social circumstances in Mill's background lead one to suspect that his awareness of the subjection of women began very early in his

childhood, became more and more acute during his teen years, and developed into a full-blown mission for change in his adult years.

It is well documented that Mill's childhood was an exceptional one, if somewhat peculiar. We know that even though Mill received exclusive attention from his father, for the purpose of his intellectual development, the education of his sisters was entrusted to his care at the age of eight years. There was nothing unusual about Mill's early status as educator since this was an application of a common technique, the Lancaster and Bell monitor system of having the master teach the older students who in turn taught the younger. Though Mill did not know enough about education to think it irregular that his sisters were receiving an education, it was nevertheless a quite uncommon practice for girls in his time. Emotionally the monitor system might have given Mill a sense of superiority over his sisters in his teaching them. As a sensitive, observant, and precocious boy, he would have been well aware of the preferential treatment he was receiving from his father in relation to the relative indifference shown the women of his household, especially his mother.

Although the full implications of this feminine subjection would not have been evident to Mill at this early age, the relationship between his parents, and his father's treatment of his mother as an inferior, would most likely have impressed upon him the disadvantaged position of women, even if he did not recognize it then as an undesirable status forced upon women, and I doubt that he did. This was indeed the case, for, as Mill tells us in his Autobiography,[2] he was clearly aware of the difference in the temperaments and

intellectual development of his parents. His father's lack of "tenderness and affection" seemed to Mill to be caused by "his ill assorted marriage and his asperities of temper [which] disabled him from making [a] tender and affectionate" atmosphere for his children.[3]

James Mill did not disguise his contempt for his wife's lack of intellectual interest and development. His "feeling towards her was bitterly expressed between the lines of his letter congratulating Dr. Thomson [the famous chemist, who was his university classmate and lifelong friend], on his marriage."[4] James Mill wrote, according to Alexander Bain, close friend and biographer:

> I am satisfied that you will have made a good choice, both because I know you are not easily deceived in persons, and because you are past that hey-day of the blood when solid qualities are apt to be overlooked for the superficial. I am happy that she is an old acquaintance, because then people are more likely to know one another, and less likely to have a source of disappointment.[5]

Michael Packe's assessment of the relation between James Mill and his wife is that,

> in Mill's own case, disappointment in his wife's intellect led him to treat her with scorn; while the hey-day of his blood impelled him to ruin her appearance in bearing him a succession of nine children over a period of twenty years.[6]

Packe summarizes this situation further by noting that "a prolonged experience of servitude seldom makes a happy mother or a pleasant home," and that

> in truth, her shortcomings were largely the result of misery. Coming from a household where femininity had been the rule, she found herself a lonely woman in a society of eccentric males, resembling each other only in their utter self-absorption. And, having surrendered up her generous portion, she had to wage a thankless struggle for respectability in an impoverished and overcrowded family. There was no choice but submission: no outlet for exasperation save in the flaunting of her tattered vanity.[7]

This stark indictment of the relationship between Mill's parents reveals the pitiful condition of his mother within the marriage. Yet, however true it might be that Mrs. Mill had no alternative but to submit or that she used vanity as a cover for distress, John Stuart Mill did not accept this view, not even in his later years after he had had greater insight into the general condition of women, and had worked untiringly to improve their condition. He continued to blame his mother for her lack of intellectual development and for the effects of her inadequacies upon her husband and children. His consistently harsh treatment of her resulted in his excluding her from the Autobiography, after he was counselled against including his biting and derogatory description of her. Mill criticizes both parents for lack of love and tenderness. He criticizes his father especially for the excessive power and control he exercised over him, but praises him for his dedication to his son's intellectual education, even if it was, as it turned out, a one-sided development. Mill is unsparing of his mother, however, as he holds her responsible for the entire disorder in their family relations. He expresses his

sentiments towards her in this famous omission from the Autobiography:

> That rarity in England, a really warm hearted mother, would in the first place have made my father a totally different being, and in the second would have made the children grow up loving and being loved. But my mother with the very best intentions, only knew how to pass her life in drudging for them. Whatever she could do for them she did, and they liked her, because she was kind to them, but to make herself loved, looked up to, or even obeyed, required qualities which she unfortunately did not possess.[8]

This assessment of Mrs. Mill's worth in the family must ever remain questionable in light of other evidence about her character. Even Francis Place, follower, creditor, and frequent house guest of James Mill, had a positive, though tainted, opinion of her; though, as Packe says, he "did not care for Mrs. Mill, whom he accused of unworthy bourgeois pretensions."[9] While staying with the Mills, Place sent a letter to his wife describing Mrs. Mill as "both good-natured and good-tempered, two capital qualities in a woman; she is, however, not a little vain of her person, and would be thought still a girl."[10] Earlier in the same letter, Place spoke of Mrs. Mill as "a patient, quiet soul, hating wrangling, and although by no means meanly submissive, manages to avoid quarelling in a very admirable manner."[11] It is clear that Mrs. Mill had many fine qualities, even if they were not those Mill and others desired of her. But however deficient Mrs. Mill might have been in her social and intellectual spheres, Mill's sister, Harriet, supports Packe's view that Mrs. Mill had no alternative but to submit to her domestic

enslavement. Packe quotes Harriet's letter to a Rev. J. Crompton in which she defends and sympathizes with her mother's position against attacks by such family associates as Alexander Bain and others who regarded Mrs. Mill as a stupid "housemaid of a woman":

> Here was an instance of two persons, as husband and wife, living as far apart, under the same roof, as the north pole from the south; from no 'fault' of my poor mother most certainly; but how was a woman with a growing family and very small means (as in the early years of the marriage) to be anything but a German Hausfrau? How could she 'intellectually' become a companion for such a mind as my father? [12]

There is indeed no doubt that Mill's home environment affected his early emotional development and drove him into a lifetime of promoting the cause of women. The early emotional suppression encountered at home is frequently cited as the cause of Mill's effusive and extremely emotional relationship with Harriet Taylor who satisfied his craving for affection while fulfilling his attendant need for intellectual companionship. Mill's awareness of the deleterious effects of his upbringing, and his bitter regrets for the loss he sustained are evident in this statement:

> I grew up in the absence of love and in the presence of fear: and many and indelible are the effects of this bringing-up, in the stunting of my moral growth. One of these, which it would have required a quick sensibility and impulsiveness of natural temperament to counteract, was habitual reserve. . . . I had no one to whom I desired to express everything which I felt;

> and the only person I was in communication with, to whom I looked up, I had too much fear of, to make the communication to him of any act or feeling ever a matter of frank impulse or spontaneous inclination....[13]

It is difficult yet not impossible to understand Mill's loyalty to and respect for his father in spite of this strained and distant relationship. The fact is, he admired his father who, against many odds, continued in the pursuit of intellectual excellence, while he despised his mother and sisters who, to him, chose to remain in subjection at the expense of personal development and intellectual relationships with their family and acquaintances. Although this obvious bias exists in Mill's views of his father's responsibility in the family's relations, one cannot but accept the views of Gertrude Himmelfarb that,

> however one understands Mill's feelings, or however he himself understood them, there is no doubt that the example of his mother provided a dramatic personal illustration of the theme that was later to preoccupy him. When in his essays on women he insisted upon the blatant inequality of the sexes or upon the fact that men suffered as much as women from that inequality, he was testifying to what he knew from personal, painful experience.[14]

Many have given psychological explanations for the way in which Mill's personal experiences were transformed into dedication to the cause of women. Not least amongst these advocates is Packe who suggests that Mill's

> complete omission of all reference to her [his mother] in the final draft of the Autobiography, his apparent scorn of her in later life, when coupled with his fanatical devotion to the cause of women in general and to one woman in particular, seem to indicate a conflict ending in sublimation.[15]

One might even speculate that in detesting his mother as a stupid Hausfrau, Mill determined that families would be improved if women had intelligence like his and his father's. Also, advocating that cause has the emotional advantage of indirectly correcting or protesting the practice of his father, as was evident in John's nervous breakdown which might be interpreted as an emotional reaction against his father who brought him up as a "thinking machine." It is possible, therefore, that contempt for his mother's subjection is conveniently displaced contempt for his own subjection to his father--a topic he dwells on at length in his Autobiography, and parts of which I have quoted above.

Even if the psychological assumptions are valid, there can be no doubt that other factors played an important part in Mill's early desire to work for the betterment of women. Mill was not unaware of the existence of women who refused to be submissive, and who asserted strong will, and independence of thought and action within the family, or of women who sought advancement outside the home. Mill learned these things both from personal experience and from his avid reading. And as Packe so rightly observes in his discussion on Mill's search for a companion, and on the quality of woman that Mill who was

so high-minded would desire, Mill could have nothing less than the best quality of mind, which he believed he found in Harriet Taylor. On this note Packe further observes that,

> from his [Mill's] observations of his mother and sisters, coupled with the fruits of his own studies, he had already formed an uneasy feeling that the lot of women in society was not all that it should be--a valuable weakness in a man seeking a life companion.[16]

Mill's early association with women of action served well to condition his expectations of women and to enforce his belief in their capabilities. Two such acquaintances are Lady Bentham, Jeremy Bentham's sister-in-law, and Sarah Austin. Mill had great respect and admiration for the Benthams to whom he credits one "of the fortunate circumstances in my education, a year's residence in France."[17] Mill's special tribute is, however, to Lady Bentham, who stood as a glowing example of the kind of woman he would have wished his mother to be:

> [She] was a woman of strong will and decided character, much general knowledge, and great practical good sense of the Edgeworth kind: she was the ruling spirit of the household as she deserved, and was well qualified, to be.[18]

It seems that the Bentham's relatively small family and sufficient means enabled them to give Mill the kind of attention that was absent in his own apparently loveless and virtually overcrowded home; for he continues:

> Their family consisted of one son (the eminent botanist) and three daughters, the youngest about two years my senior. I am indebted to them for much and various instruction, and for an almost parental interest in my welfare.[19]

This almost parental interest was continued by Sarah Austin, who taught Mill's sisters during his absence and later taught Mill German. Whatever the nature of their relationship, it was sufficiently close for Mill to address Mrs. Austin as "Mutterlein"[20] or little mother, and he wrote to her repeatedly in this vein. There is no doubt that Mill admired Mrs. Austin, although differences of opinion changed their relationship to a less cordial one in later years.[21] Mrs. Austin had the type of character, beauty, and spirit which greatly attracted Mill, and which earned her much praise and admiration from other quarters. Bruce Mazlish describes her as "the beautiful and vivacious youngest daughter of the important and well-connected Taylor family of the area."[22] "She was a gifted intellectual in her own right, whose salon in later life was admired by all."[23] Packe also shares this enthusiasm for Sarah Austin's attributes. He says that she was from a family that was "comfortable, numerous, intelligent, well-read, and devout in an inner-lighted way," and that "they were also great humanitarians."[24] Mrs. Austin also had special qualities that would be most attractive to Mill, for she is said to have saved her husband from a psychological breakdown during their courtship and later used her talents to ease their financial difficulties by teaching and translating German. After she became

engaged to her husband who was quite morose and dissatisfied with life,

> she gave up dancing, and settled down to Jurisprudence. Deep in the inert mass of Austin's despondency she sensed the smouldering of genius; she resolved to bring it out, to defeat the cramped feeling of incompetence which forestalled achievement with elaboration, and made him ill with worry.[25]

According to Mazlish, "she believed that she would be his salvation, and it seemed that she was."[26] During his adult years Mill admired the abilities of many other women who would have influenced his interest in the problems of women. He was closely associated with Harriet Martineau, Eliza and Sarah Flower, and Florence Nightingale, women who had distinguished themselves as independent individuals. The influence of Harriet Taylor, his closest friend and later his wife, is well documented by both Mill and his many critics and admirers.

Mill would also have been influenced by his reading, as suggested by Packe; and Mill himself tells in his Autobiography of his reaction to his father's view of the place of women in society. On James Mill's proposal in his Essay on Government, that "women may consistently with good government, be excluded from the suffrage, because their interest is the same with that of men," Mill "most positively dissented,"[27] and declared his position thus:

> But I thought then, as I have always thought since, that the opinion which he acknowledged, no less than that which he disclaimed, is as great an error as any of those against which the Essay was directed; that the interest of

> women is included in that of men exactly as much and no more, as the interest of subjects is included in that of kings; and that every reason which exists for giving the suffrage to anybody, demands that it should not be witheld from women.[28]

Even though Mill does not acknowledge being acquainted with Mary Wollstonecraft's A Vindication of the Rights of Women, published in 1792, which though much criticized for its technical flaws and emotional excesses, nevertheless, presents a convincing picture of the deplorable conditions in which women existed, and makes a strong plea for the emancipation of women, he was most probably aware of this work and of Wollstonecraft's personal and practical contributions to the cause of women, which would have impressed him most favourably. Mill read William Thompson's APPEAL Of One Half The Human Race WOMEN Against The Pretensions Of The Other Half MEN To Retain Them In Political, And Thence In Civil And Domestic, Slavery, published 1825. In Autobiography, Mill acknowledges close acquaintance with Thompson and praises both the man and his work.[29] Richard Lee, in his introduction to Appeal, suggests, as does Mill, that the writing of this book "was provoked by James Mill's cryptic dismissal of political rights for women in his famous 'Essay on Government.'"[30] Lee suggests also that

> Thompson, despite his occasionally strident tone, made the most impressive case for women's rights to appear until...John Stuart Mill['s]...Subjection of Women.[31]

I.B. O'Malley states, in his book, Women in Subjection, that although

Thompson "is little known to history...one of the few mentions of him is in a description" by John Stuart Mill of the debates in 1825 between the Philosophic Radicals and the "Owenites" of which Thompson was a member.[32] Mill thought Thompson 'a very estimable man,'[33] and O'Malley suggests that Thompson was "the first man to write a book in support of the political equality of women,"[34] and that his was the earliest literary name associated with "Co-operation."[35]

A singular incident which occurred as a result of Mill's studies, and which no doubt fired his passionate interest in, and work for, women's rights all his life, was his brush with the law at the age of seventeen. Mill had already read Malthus' population theory and had most probably formed some opinions on the relationship between overpopulation and the misery of the poor. As Packe tells the story of Mill's arrest for distributing birth control pamphlets, it occurred thus:

> John Mill, seventeen and neatly dressed on a summer morning, was not thinking about this [Place's pamphlet on birth control] as he swung healthily through St. James's Park on his way to the India House. Under a tree, a bundle caught his eye. Curious, he stopped and probed. It was a baby, blue, newborn and strangled, wrapped up in grimy rags, and left. He reported it some time later to the first watchman he encountered. Then, passing the Old Bailey, he saw bodies of criminals dangling, decorous in white smocks, grotesque, ungainly, hanging by the neck. Their hands were pinioned. Seven ages of man, and all unwanted. Shocked, he told Francis Place what he had seen. Place explained the alternative to misery and vice, and made it clear what he must do.[36]

Mill was excited at the prospect of actively participating in this program of social reform. So, "with an unknown friend," says Packe, "he sped through London with the tracts. Why bear children you cannot feed, cannot educate? Better not bear them at all."[37] The significant point is that the pamphlets were directed at women; but as Packe shows, this first public act, directed at changing the social condition of women, ended in disaster:

> As the practical information concerned women principally, they strewed it in their way, down area steps where maids were scrubbing dumbly, at factory gates at the close of the sixteen-hour day. At last they were caught, and hailed away to Bow Street, where they were locked up till they could be brought before the magistrate.[38]

Mill and his friend were arrested and treated as corrupt, mischievious miscreants who were "attempting to corrupt the purity of English womanhood."[39] Fortunately for them, and following severe remonstrance from the Lord Mayor, they were released after "a day or two." It is hardly credible that Mill would have escaped these traumatic episodes without some indelible effect, particularly when what to him was a social and moral duty was interpreted as an act of depravity. The lasting effect of this incident is substantiated in the report of Mill's later encounter with the said Lord Mayor at a banquet:

> The Lord Mayor beamed civilly; "I have had the pleasure of sitting opposite you before, Mr. Mill," he said. Mill agreed tartly: he would have a happier memory of the occasion, he replied, if the Lord Mayor had been as

> quick then as he was now in perceiving opposites: for he would have been able to discriminate between an attempt to prevent infanticide and the promotion of obscenity.[40]

The ghastly spectacles of a murdered infant and hanged criminals motivated Mill into action for social change, and in particular change for women whose abused status he hereafter associated with the overpopulation question. An added rub would be Mill's personal association with the overcrowding in his own home, and interestingly enough, in the home of Francis Place, the birth control pamphleteer, with "nineteen howling inhabitants."[41]

Mill's passionate appreciation of the elevating effects of space, elegance, and beauty, as well as his revulsion against cramped, overcrowded spaces and their stunting effects upon the individual, are clearly stated in his Autobiography. In speaking of the pleasure and heightened feelings he derived during the years from eight to eleven when he frequented Ford Abbey, the country home of Mr. Jeremy Bentham, Mill declares that

> nothing contributes more to nourish elevation of sentiments in a people, than the large and free character of their habitations.[42]

Mill's well-known romantic sentiments for the Middle Ages, like those of many of his contemporaries who viewed that period as a past ideal, are made apparent as he continues:

> The middle-age architecture, the baronial

> hall, and the spacious and lofty rooms, of this fine old place, so unlike the mean and cramped externals of English middle class life, gave me the sentiment of a larger and freer existence, and were to me a sort of poetic cultivation, aided also by the character of the grounds in which the Abbey stood; which were riant, umbrageous, and full of the sound of falling waters.[43]

There can be no doubt that many factors motivated Mill into dedicating himself to change the deplorable condition in which women existed socially, economically, politically. Himmelfarb suggests that

> his increasing preoccupation with this issue is evident in his correspondence, where it looms larger in each successive volume, until in the final two volumes it becomes a major, perhaps dominant, theme of his letters and, it would seem, of his daily activities.[44]

Packe advances the view that Mill, as a "fully-fledged reviewer" and contributor in "his special field of libel laws and freedom of the press," disdained the existing quality of periodical literature, but valued the experience gained as reviewer of these articles. However, "certain excursions of his own about the position of women foreshadowed his later interest in that topic, an interest independently acquired as his father cared nothing for it."[45] Mill's first article on behalf of women, appeared in the second issue of the Westminster Review, 1824. As head of the "Younger Radicals" who "favoured complete intellectual, political, and social equality of the sexes,"[46] he addressed the issue of the status of women by attacking the

Edinburgh Review for its base views about women's character and position in society. As Wendell Robert Carr puts it in his introduction to The Subjection of Women,

> in his first substantial article [Mill] levelled a broadside against the prevailing glorification of female submissiveness, roundly condemning the morality that considered "helplessness" and total dependence upon a husband the apogee of "delicacy" and "femininity."[47]

As shown by the Westminster Review article, Mill began his literary efforts as champion of women's rights at a very early age.[48] He accurately diagnosed the causes of the social problems of women, and showed penetrating insight into the extreme imbalance in relations between the sexes. Whatever the origin of his initial interest in the unequal status of women, it is clear that he deemed this issue of social injustice sufficiently important to be worth a lifetime's dedication towards its correction. It remains therefore to examine Mill's available writings on the social condition of women, to determine the extent of his contribution to, and interest in, this cause, one among many he pursued for human progress, and to which he gave his unwavering attention. This, then, will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

MILL'S INTEREST IN, AND WORK ON, THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF WOMEN

As stated in Chapter One, John Stuart Mill was engaged with many social and political issues, among which promoting the advancement of women was one of his primary endeavours. It is truly amazing to discover just how much time and effort he expended on the social problems of women, when one considers that Mill was a fully employed civil servant, from the age of fifteen until his retirement, owing to ill health, at the age of fifty two, and that he had mountains of correspondence to maintain between India House and the East India Government. Yet, with all this primary responsibility, poor health, pressing personal and family commitments, and constant political involvements, Mill still had time to be both editor of, and contributor to several periodicals. Mill also engaged in a vast amount of personal correspondence, and actually found time to take extended walking tours and continental holidays, while pursuing his hobby of botany. As if all this was not enough for one man, Mill also wrote newspaper articles (many on violence against women), had time to be

a member of Parliament, a University Rector, and most impressively, he was able to make an abundant contribution to the literary world, as well as in the social, philosophical, political, and economic spheres.

John Stuart Mill distinguished himself as a potential champion of the cause of women at the early age of seventeen years by distributing birth control pamphlets and by challenging his father's narrow views on the status of women. But it was his first article in the second issue of the Westminster Review, 1824, which revealed, publicly, his serious concern for the rights of women, and showed what keen insight he had into women's social problems. Among the younger Radicals, "the younger Mill," says Nesbitt, "was the first to approach the subject."[1] However, he was not without the support of the young Radicals whom he headed, for, as a group,

> they thought of women as individuals, who, like men, might be improved almost if not quite to the point of perfection. Hence the intellectual welfare of woman and her social rights and privileges, as well as the effect of her subjection upon society as a whole, appeared very important to them.[2]

As Nesbitt rightly states, two paragraphs of the Review article are "notable for their advanced views on the position of women."[3] That Mill should have such understanding of the condition of women at such a young age is indeed remarkable. It is worthwhile, therefore, to identify the two paragraphs which, above the rest, reveal the selfish and misguided motives Mill specifies as men's reasons for subjecting women to a lifetime of social and political inequality. In the first of these paragraphs, Mill declares:

> He who is restrained by indolence from improving himself, has a direct interest in preventing the improvement of others; since, if others improve, and he does not keep pace with them, he must necessarily lose his rank in their estimation. But he is most of all interested in the non-improvement of his wife. For he thinks, and he believes that others think, that he ought to be her guardian and protector: to rely, therefore, upon her for protection and guidance, instead of extending it to her, is more than usually humiliating.[4]

In the next paragraph, Mill attacks the morality ascribed to women, the very cause of their subjection:

> To these causes must be ascribed the morality which is usually chalked out for women.... The qualities which are said to constitute excellence in a woman, are very different from those which constitute excellence in man. It is considered meritorious in a man to be independent: to be sufficient to himself; not to be in a constant state of pupillage. In a woman, helplessness, both of mind and of body, is the most admired of attributes. A man is despised, if he be not courageous. In a woman, it is esteemed amiable to be a coward. To be entirely dependent upon her husband for every pleasure, and for exemption from every pain; to feel secure, only when under his protection; to be incapable of forming any opinion, or of taking any resolution without his advice and aid; this is amiable, this is delicate, this is feminine: while all who infringe on any of the prerogatives which man thinks proper to reserve for himself; all who can or will be of any use, either to themselves or to the world, otherwise than as the slaves and drudges of their husband, are called masculine, and other names intended to convey disapprobation. Even they who profess admiration for instructed women, not unfrequently select their own wives from among the ignorant and helpless.[5]

Mill, like other Utilitarians, found the custom of gallantry to ladies oppressive and derogatory, since it presupposed and encouraged uselessness as a "desirable feminine attribute," and "originated in

unalloyed male selfishness."[6] In his essay, "Age of Chivalry," written in 1826, Mill claims that "chivalric gallantry is one species of foppery: the gallantry of the middle ages was another," and, like all politeness based on ceremony, is nothing more than the "false refinement" of a period midway between "savage and civilized life."[7] Mill observes that good treatment of women "is one of the surest marks of high civilization."[8] He continues,

> it does not consist in treating them as idols to be worshipped, or trinkets to be worn for display; anymore than in shutting them up like jewels in a case, removed from the light of the sun and the sight of men.[9]

Mill allows that this treatment proves women are valued; but "the value set upon them is quite compatible with perfect indifference to their happiness or misery."[10] The knights were in a state of semi-savagery, where their sexual desire was at its highest, since they were beyond the state of low sexual excitement in the savage, and below the "active life of the barbarian"[11] or "the intellectual excitement of the Chrestomath."[12] Their strong sexual desire made it extremely difficult for them "to obtain the woman who was the object of desire," and they could not have her "without her own consent."[13] Chivalric gallantry is therefore debasing to women since knights fought not for their happiness but to possess them and to display their charms before the world. Thus male vanity and pride of possession caused knights to worship beautiful women of high birth, while the daughters of vassals were demanded of their fathers, "as a matter of course," to be objects of the insatiable passion of these

brutes.[14] But as Mill observes, the test of civilization is in the regard shown for women, as

> the frequency of rapes and abductions, even in the case of women of elevated ranks, is another important proof how little connection the foppish gallantry of that age had with the real happiness of the sex affected to be adored.[15]

Mill and his young Radicals were not reluctant to take to task anyone, man or woman, who denied the equality of the sexes or who insisted on keeping women in submission. Thus, in the article "Poetry of L.E.L.," January 1827, Mill and his companions lambasted the beautiful and popular authoress Letitia Landon, who was famous for her romantic "descriptions of love, heroes, heroines, and landscapes," and for her absurd but popular opinion that women should be "subordinated to men," but infamous among the young Radicals for her acquiescence to women's subjection.[16] Not only does Landon glorify the chivalric code which upholds war and debases the individual, but she

> takes every opportunity of preaching up this perfect subordination, and of bestowing admiration upon those qualities which fit women for being useful and agreeable slaves; while those unfortunate attributes, which render the dominion of men precarious, are visited with corresponding reprobation.[17]

Mill regrets that women invariably adopt the opinions of men as their own "no matter whether inimical or not to the interests of women."[18] In concert with the other Radicals he implores L.E.L. to use the "overflowings of her benevolence" more "advantageously" in

"sympathizing with the wrongs of her sex," rather than "with the victims of their cruelties."[19] Nesbitt says,

> so we see the younger Mill already the sovereign champion of intelligence and self-reliance in woman, impeded as these qualities were by her position upon a decorative but thoroughly rotten pedestal.[20]

Mill attacked this rotten pedestal in the private document on marriage and divorce which he wrote for Harriet Taylor in 1832.[21] In this penetrating statement which follows closely his earlier writings on the subject of women's oppression in society, Mill establishes the theme of equality as a first principle from which all else involving relations between the sexes must proceed. He says,

> in the investigation of truth, as in all else, 'it is not good for a man to be alone.' And more than all, in what concerns the relations of Man with Woman, the law which is to be observed by both should surely be made by both; not, as hitherto, by the stronger only.[22]

Mill's idealism about marriage is clearly reflected in his views on freedom of choice. He believes that persons who are intellectually and spiritually cultivated are quite capable of choosing to unite with each other without the aid of moral laws. His view of the law of marriage as it existed in his time is that it "has been made by sensualists, and for sensualists and to bind sensualists."[23] He regards the "aim and purpose" of the marriage law as intended exclusively to control the body in hopes of controlling the soul, or else to capture the body and to disregard the soul as being of no consequence.[24] The point is, Mill views a small select segment of

society as possessing the "highest natures." These are persons who are capable of combining feelings and intellect to produce a kind of radiant beauty, which, with the exercise of willpower, can give much happiness to those whom they influence.[25] These highly moral persons possess "lofty" and "refined" imagination and desire to make the right decisions for the happiness of all. To them, therefore, "general rules are merely aids to prudence in the choice of means; not peremptory obligations;"[26] and marriage without "strong affection" is "but one continued act of self-sacrifice."[27] But worst of all, the indissolubility of marriage, and its curtailment of freedom of choice, is a vast oppressive "yoke" upon the natural inclination of these persons of higher nature.[28]

Mill uses this preliminary view of the type of persons who were most deeply affected by the existing marriage law to set the tone of his exposition on the status of women. Even though Mill is obviously élitist in his views on human nature, and in his assumption that the highest morality of which the highest natures are capable is also suitable for the "inferior natures," he is certainly not biased in his view that each individual should have "free and voluntary choice," especially in matters concerning the affections. As Mill sees it, the indissolubility of marriage was once a powerful means of elevating the social condition of women; but with the passage of time, it had become nothing more than a one-sided arrangement in which a man, almost anywhere in the world, could divorce his wife and cast her off without mercy, yet a woman could neither leave nor divorce her husband, no matter how depraved her condition. Mill's major concern is that this

state of affirs is not so very distant from his own time; but an even greater tragedy is that many women are content to exist in this vulgar condition because they believe that their sexuality gives them power over their husbands, and is sufficient to keep their men from losing interest in them. Mill believes that most women resent and resist any question of divorce because the indissolubility of marriage keeps them secure in relations which they maintain primarily by resorting to "those arts."[29] He inveighs against such repulsive marital relations, for he contends that even after they have reached the points of satiety and revulsion, persons remain together solely for sensuous and economic reasons. Mill is particularly incensed by those women whose limited capacity for higher attainments makes them succumb blindly to the humdrum security of dependence in marriage and resist all efforts for change. In contrast, all women with refined natures find it "disgusting in the extreme" to remain in a relationship the stability of which depends on their cunning. To Mill, therefore, the condition of women was a reflection of

> the absurdity and immorality of a state of society and opinion in which a woman is at all dependent for her social position upon the fact of her being or not being married.[30]

Even though Mill expects women to rise above their condition, and speaks unfavourably of those women who are too comfortable with their submissive state, he is very conscious of the social, political, and economic pressures which force many women to be dependent, even when they desire to be otherwise. Mill blames "education and custom" for the "artificially desirable" position of married women, who

have even fewer legal rights than single women, especially those with property. The evil perpetuated by the system, which makes marriage the only useful and desirable occupation for women, causes much difficulty for single women, and Mill bemoans the fact that women have "no vocation or useful office to fulfill in the world," except that of wife and mother.[31] Mill expresses regrets for the plight of single women who have to prove their usefulness, something that "very few either men or women ever do establish."[32] As Mill puts it:

> Surely it is wrong, wrong in every way, & on every view of morality, even the vulgar view--that there should exist any motives to marriage except the happiness which two persons who love one another feel in associating their existence.[33]

Mill's interest in individual rights and personal freedom is dominant in his views on divorce. He sees the problems of women as rooted in the unavailability of divorce, and suggests that the question cannot be settled until the more fundamental issue of women's status is examined and dealt with. Here, then, is the seed of Mill's later quest for the enfranchisement of women, for to him, "the question is not what marriage ought to be but a far wider question, what women ought to be."[34] His point is that when women achieve equality with men, the question of divorce will settle itself. The necessity is to

> determine whether marriage is to be a relation between two equal beings, or between a superior & an inferior, between a protector and a dependent, & all other doubts will easily be resolved.[35]

Mill points out further that the progress of civilization has made inequality between the sexes no longer a matter of differences in physical strength; and the existing inequality based on "artificial feelings and prejudices" is even more damaging, because of its being founded on a law that arose from education and custom rather than from nature. Mill concludes that men and women should be perfectly independent of each other except where strong affection draws them together into "a voluntary surrender, renewed and renewing at each instant by free and spontaneous choice."[36]

This matter of personal independence raises further the issue of women's education and work, for, without the kind of education which gives women the freedom to choose, they must remain dependent on fathers or husbands all their lives. Mill sees this state of dependency as despicable because, where there is no affection, a dependent woman, without any alternative, is reduced to the position of a mere prostitute "delivering up her person for bread."[37] For Mill, the question is not whether a woman should work outside the home, but rather, whether she should have the choice to prepare herself to do so if she so desires. Mill expresses reservations about overloading the labour market, and suggests that where there is sufficient means in the home, and the marriage a cordial and affectionate one, the wife should acquire her education for the advancement of herself and her relations. Mill deems "vulgar" the view that a woman's place is in the home, but he sees no reason why a woman with insufficient means should not be educated to teach her children and to do her own housework. Another important point for Mill, is that a woman should be free to

undertake any kind of employment she chooses, whether it be to share in her husband's occupation or to engage in the most "energetic and definite employment."[38] He adds, however, that

> the great occupation of women should be to beautify life: to cultivate, for her own sake & that of those who surround her, all her faculties of mind, soul, and body; all her powers of enjoyment, & powers of giving enjoyment; & to diffuse beauty, elegance, & grace everywhere.[39]

Although this statement about women's roles gives the impression that Mill wants women to be all things to all people, this is certainly not his intention, though one must admit that his susceptibility to beauty makes him somewhat excessive in his aesthetic expectations. However, Mill's desire for women's freedom is not lessened by his passion for beauty, as we can see by the abhorrence he feels for any relationship that is purely sensual. Mill is particularly outspoken against the conditions under which young women are given in marriage. He believes that there will always be innumerable cases in which a first marriage should be dissolved, because it is often made with little thought. As he sees it, the cause of failure generally stems from innocence, youth, and inexperience, but one major disadvantage is the selfish motives of relatives. Mill is particularly irritated by the fact that "a woman is allowed to give herself away for life, at an age at which she is not allowed to dispose of the most inconsiderable landed estate."[40] It is Mill's view that parents and guardians are neither capable nor suitable to direct the immature judgements of young persons. The young should therefore be given the

freedom to gain experience, and then choose either not to marry or to wait until a suitable age, perhaps around thirty, before making such an important decision. Mill contends that,

> the only thing which a young girl can do, worse than marrying to please herself, is marrying to please any other person.[41]

The next point of concern in Mill's discussion on marriage and divorce is the view that marriage should remain indissoluble as a deterrent for those who would either make frequent changes or choose indiscriminately with the idea that dissolution could always occur sometime in the future. Mill responds to this assumption by raising arguments which might be used to support it, then continues with arguments against it, showing the justice inherent in women's being free to divorce or to remain married. The arguments raised in favour of the indissolubility of marriage are first, that divorce will have mischievous and deleterious effects upon the minds of those who make repeated trials for happiness but who experience repeated failures. Second, that spiritual breakdown will occur in the "finer natures," leading to disillusionment and disgust "in all things." Thus "their susceptibilities are deadened, or converted into sources of bitterness, and they lose the power of being ever contented."[42] The effects of a breakdown on the "commoner natures" are equally "deplorable," for these natures become incapable of being happy, "their morality is depraved": they lose all "refinement and delicacy of character," and any sense of duty or "sacredness" in their marital relations is reduced to a mere "passing intrigue." Third, that the needs of children

are a dominant consideration in favour of the indissolubility of marriage.

Mill argues further that "if marriages were easily dissoluble," wise persons would consider carefully the merits of having children, and would wait for a long period of time to determine if the happiness they have found is "adequate to their aspirations."[43] Where there is divorce between parents, Mill offers the idea that a communal living pattern in society would satisfy the needs of the children, and lessen the trauma of a drastic separation, since the parents would continue to relate through mutual goodwill, and a common interest in their children.[44] Mill focuses the final argument on those persons who have a limited capacity for happiness and who enter into marriage expecting to be made happy. Each sees the deficiencies in the union as belonging to the other party and is anxious to separate and find happiness with someone else. Mill points out that given time, the disappointment would lessen, and these persons would learn to be happy together, because each would come to understand his own limitations and thereby avoid repeated experiments and disappointments.

In arguing the case for divorce, Mill claims that even though the arguments against dissolving marriage are sound, they do not have sufficient validity to render them acceptable, because in divorce people are required to act with moral responsibility and with the same restraints from public opinion as they would in any other circumstances in their lives. Moral restraint might be absent if society sanctioned "promiscuous intercourse," but in this event the result

would be the same with or without the freedom to obtain a divorce.[45] It is Mill's view, therefore, that no argument is strong enough to defend the indissolubility of marriage because like any other human relations marriage should be based on a voluntary contract. This is the only means by which "the condition and character of women" can "become what it ought to be."[46] Mill's conclusion is that the marriage contract, as it exists, is a continuation of the conditions of slavery, in which women need the security and protection of their masters. Times have changed, however, and Mill believes that the time has come for women to aspire after greater things than merely to find a "protector." Women are no longer property; they are quite capable of functioning alone. Women are in fact "ripe for equality," says Mill; they have moved from the position of total dependency in slavery to a "nominal equality" in marriage.[47] This is not real equality, however, because the inadequate and unacceptable situation of the strong against the weak still exists. Mill cautions women that those who seek divorce will be castigated by public opinion, but their freedom and independence will place them beyond the reach of any damaging effects.

In this discussion of marriage and divorce in the treatise to Harriet Taylor, Mill's perception of the state of marital relations and the condition of women within these relations is indeed profound. His observations, recommendations, predictions, his plea for justice, balance, and tolerance, are as applicable today as they were in his time. This essay which so vividly depicts the condition of women, and which was intended solely as private thoughts shared with a

special friend, contains all the principles expounded several decades later in Mill's most powerful public statement on the subject, The Subjection of Women. In the meantime, Mill continued to be involved in many issues concerning women and their under-privileged condition in society.

One such issue involved a group of "operative flax-spinners" who were calling for "Legislative measures" to limit and regulate the working hours of young persons employed in the flax-spinning trade in Scotland. On January 29, 1832, Mill's article, "Employment of Children in Manufactories," appeared in the Examiner. In it, he congratulates the flax-spinners for "the force of argument, and dignified calmness of manner, displayed in this document to which the ablest periodical works of the day could not produce on this important subject any thing superior." At the same time, Mill attacks "the moral and physical evils occasioned by the over-working of male and female children in manufactories."[48] While he applauds the proposed measures for restricted hours, he wants most of all to see a law which would abolish "the employment of young children under fourteen," and "females of any age, in manufactories."[49] Not only should children under fourteen be receiving physical and intellectual education, but mothers should not be taken from their children because of having to earn a living. The husband should receive increased wages as sole supporter of the family; but there is the danger that without legislation greedy persons, who allow their wives and children to work while others abstain, would gain the advantage, and private interest would destroy good intention.

Mill's good intentions for women operatives did not satisfy the economic needs of a large group of women who had to work for a living. His concern for the status of women, and his eagerness to correct their many social disadvantages, caused him to fall into the obvious contradiction of recommending that women should be excluded from work in manufactories, while at the same time advocating their economic independence. This shortsightedness was not to be overlooked by even his greatest admirers. He was subsequently challenged by a group of Lancashire women to present satisfactory alternatives for women without means, who had to work in manufactories. In a letter of February 2, 1832, to "The Editor of the Examiner," these women praise Mill for his opinion on the "Factory Bill," because of his having "the real welfare of the working classes at heart" and because of his having much impressed them with "the idea of your profound knowledge in these matters." They continue:

> You are for doing away with our services in manufactories altogether. So much the better, if you had pointed out any other more eligible and practical employment for the surplus female labour, that will want other channels for subsistence. . . . We see no way of escape from starvation, but to accept of the very tempting offers of the newspapers, held out as baits for us, fairly to ship ourselves off to Vandieman's Land, on the very delicate errand of husband-hunting, and having safely arrived at the "Land of Goshen," jump ashore, with a "who wants me?" Now then, as we are a class of society who will be materially affected by any alteration of the present laws, we put it seriously to you, whether, as you have deprived us of our means of earning our bread, you are not bound to point out a more eligible and suitable employment for us?[50]

Mill, undaunted by this criticism, replies that, "in spite of our correspondent's jocular remarks on female emigrants," the best solution

to the problem was indeed emigration, because, with scarcity of labour and consequent high salaries, conditions for women in Australia or Canada were ideal.[51]

Mill's defence of women was comprehensive; and he did not hesitate to correct any erroneous views about women, be they from other women, from friends, or from enemies. This was the case when at the height of their friendship, Mill sent Carlyle, at Craigenputtock, his accustomed supply of books, including the works of Madame Roland whom Mill considered"the noblest character by far of the French Revolution, perhaps of France itself; though far from the most brilliant;"[52] and Carlyle stated in a letter to Mill that "she was almost rather a man than a woman." Even though Carlyle intended no actual offence, he nevertheless rated a lecture from Mill as follows:

> There was one thing in what you said of Madame Roland which I did not quite like--it was, that she was almost rather a man than a woman: I believe that I quite agree in all that you really meant, but is there really a distinction between the highest masculine & the highest feminine character? I do not mean the mechanical acquirements; those, of course, will very commonly be different. But the women, of all I have known, who possessed the highest measure of what are considered feminine qualities, have combined with them more of the highest masculine qualities than I have ever seen in any but one or two men, & those one or two men were also in many respects almost women. I suspect it is the second-rate people of the two sexes that are unlike--the first-rate are alike in both--except--no, I do not think I can except anything--but then, in this respect, my position has been and is, what you say every human being's is in many respects "a peculiar one."--[53]

Mill found other opponents in the imposters Fontana and Prati, who claimed to be Saint-Simonians yet went about making false statements,

in pamphlets, about the Saint-Simonian's views on "the pretended community of women, or marriage and divorce."[54] In his article of February 2, 1834, Mill sets out to discredit the false claims of Fontana and Prati who wrote an insubstantial pamphlet falsely representing the Saint-Simonians, and claiming to be authorized representatives of a society already defunct. Mill's chief complaint is that these low-minded inferiors represented the Saint-Simonians as "an obscure knot of senseless visionaries, or designing knaves, who inculcate. . . .community of goods and community of women: in other words, profligacy and universal plunder."[55] This misrepresentation incensed Mill especially because of its implications about the status of women within this authoritarian organization. Mill contends that the Saint-Simonian system was one of near despotism rather than "licentiousness, or even rational liberty," for it made marriage and divorce depend upon circumstances, of which others, and not the parties themselves, were to be the judges."[56] Mill's chief frustration was that mankind in general was of the same opinion as these two imposters, who regarded divorce as an indecent practice. He reiterates his claim that couples who remain together without affection, and for "merely animal connexion," are basically sensuous and indelicate; and he fails

> to conceive how a people, whose current morality countenances or tolerates such a debasing prostitution, can dare to call any doctrines or practices gross or licentious.[57]

Mill also restates his belief in the equality of the sexes, and in divorce as an important step in freeing women from the dependence on

men for "their subsistence, and their estimation in society." He drives home his point with a further assault upon the depraved morality of his society:

> To the impure, all things are impure: a sensualist, let him hold what opinion he may, will hold it in a sensual spirit: to such, marriage as it now exists, is but a guarantee of exclusive property in an instrument of sensual gratification. The most unlimited freedom of divorce could engender no feeling viler than this. But unlimited freedom is not what we contend for. It might be suitable to a people among whom personal profligacy is rare; but in the present state of European society, the degree of latitude allowed must be limited by the varying probability of its being abused for purposes of sensuality, or exercised in mere caprice.[58]

Although Mill had the highest respect for superior women, he did not hesitate to confront women, of any stature, where good taste was wanting, and where the status of women was being jeopardized. For example, in his letter of 28 September, 1837, to John Robertson, editor of the London and Westminster Review, he accuses Harriet Martineau of producing the low quality of writing generally expected of women, thereby assisting in their disparagement. He regards her article on the new Queen, Victoria, as "childish, and if we take away the prettiness and masculine structure of some of the sentences it is what people may forgive and like well enough in a woman, but not in a parcel of men."[59] Mill is particularly disappointed, for as he sees it, in spite of her ability to think, "her trying hard for philosophy," and her feeble attempt at "opinion or observation" through which "a coach and six" could easily be driven, made her no better than those women who had "written tragedies," and learned "to put good women's feelings

into men's words, and to make small things look like great ones."[60] Mill also attacked Miss Martineau's opinion of Queen Victoria, the subject of the article, for to him the review lacked "dignity" and "practicalness," particularly in its comparison of Victoria with Elizabeth, and its suggestion that Queen Victoria was young and "artless."[61] Mill's view was that Martineau was giving the queen false notions about her abilities, and duties. He declares:

> She always treats the Queen as artless.
> She cannot be artless,...about doing her duty to her subjects...she is just a lively, spirited young lady, thinking only of enjoying herself, and who never is nor ever will be conscious of any difficulties or responsibilities,--no more than Marie Antoinette, who was a much cleverer woman and had much more will and character than she is ever likely to have. She is conscious, I dare say, of good intentions, as every other young lady is; she is not conscious of wishing any harm to any one, unless they have offended her,...That is the nature of the well-meanings of a person like her,...[62]

In 1843, a battle raged between Mill and Comte on account of the latter's views on the natural inferiority of women, whose smaller brain and body, in comparison with those of men, indicated natural inferiority of "intelligence" and "physique."[63] Mill did not score too well in this encounter for, as he later admitted, he made too many concessions, so he refused to show his correspondence with Comte to anyone.[64] This temporary setback did not sway Mill from his purpose to defend the cause of women for in 1844 he praised Michelet's History of France[65] for, among other things, its picture of the status of women in the middle ages; for to Mill this was the only period in "history when women were treated with equality." In his

discussion of Guizot's Essay and Letters on History, 1845, Mill emphasizes the importance of women in the feudal system, when the chatelaine was "the representative of the chief's person and the delegate of his authority, during his frequent absences." Mill continues:

> In his warlike expeditions and hunting excursions, his crusadings and his captivities, she directed his affairs, and governed his people with a power equal to his own. No importance comparable to this, no position equally calculated to call forth the human faculties, had fallen to the lot of women, before, nor, it may be added, since. And the fruits are seen in the many examples of heroic women which the feudal annals present to us; women who fully equalled, in masculine virtue, the bravest of men with whom they associated; often greatly surpassed in prudence, and fell short of them only in ferocity.[66]

This view of women's status in the Middle Ages is clearly incompatible with Mill's earlier views on the foppery of medieval gallantry. But the contradiction seems to consist in Mill's constant attempts to make contrast and to find balance. While he condemns medieval gallantry for its debasement of women, it is only one side of the coin, and Mill is indeed prepared to give credit to the age for what he considers its progressive attitude towards those women who were allowed to assume positions of authority. And as Packe says,

> though Mill's roseate opinion of the middle ages was shared by most of his generation, his reasons were peculiarly his own. He saw a world where each man had to make his own decisions, and was not only a more important but a more responsible creature than he had since become. He saw an era when men rose up in hosts for the militant pursuit of an ideal. An era of widening knowledge, and increasing tolerance even of the Moslem enemy. In particular, the only era in

> history when women were treated with equality; when the Chatelaine was as good as her Lord in everything save actual ferocity.[67]

From heroic women Mill turns his attention to women in social and economic slavery, an issue that was to occupy him all his life. In his letter of November, 1848, to John Jay, lawyer, author, diplomat, of New York, Mill expresses his contempt for a reviewer of his Principles of Political Economy, who interpreted the work in a tone "extremely repugnant to me," and goes on to assert the "fundamental" differences between them on the question of population.[68] But the thing that Mill finds "really below contempt" is the reviewer's attitude on the question of "equality of political rights and of social position in behalf of women."[69] He was so incensed by this person that he could not resist concluding with an attack upon the United States and its inhumane policy of slavery; stating that, "I fear that a country where institutions profess to be founded on equality, and which yet maintains the slavery of black men and of all women, will be one of the last to relinquish that other servitude;"[70] "that other servitude" being most probably the lack of political rights for women. Mill does not make this point clear.

On February 21, 1849, in a letter to Harriet Taylor, Mill laments the bad review given a French author who advocated women's rights. Mill's chief regret was that the reviewer laid "down the doctrine very positively that women always are and must always be what men make them."[71] This, he asserts, is the false assumption on which the whole state of bad relations between the sexes rests. He

believes that such "nonsensical prejudice" can only be shaken by two things: "a better psychology and theory of human nature, for the few; and for the many, more and greater proofs by example of what women can do."[72] Thus Mill suggests that Harriet should hurry up and finish her "little book;" apparently the "Enfranchisement of Women" which appeared two years later.[73] In a letter of March 14, 1849, Mill makes brief mention of Fox's inclusion in his lectures, of two passages from Mill's Principles of Political Economy with strong references to the independence of women, and to women's suffrage.[74]

The issues of population and marriage, became subjects for harsh words, and diverse opinions between Mill and William George Ward, Roman Catholic theologian and philosopher, whose moral views Mill absolutely deplored. Mill's letter to Ward, in the Spring of 1849, acknowledged the deep repugnance that each had for the other's views on the subject of marriage and population. In particular, Mill fails to comprehend how Ward could believe that a person could retain his title to respect while continuing to live in conditions he felt degrading to him; this being the very situation from which Mill was working to relieve women. He views this as a "gross & grovelling" condition which is "the extreme of animalism & sensuality in the fullest sense of the bad meaning of those terms."[75] Mill also defends his agreement with Malthus' population theory by asserting that the evils of over-population have existed throughout history. This hydra was to rear its head time and again in Mill's discussions of its economic, social, and political implications. In one such letter to Edward Hereford, solicitor, coroner, founder and President

of the Manchester Statistical Society, on January 22, 1850, Mill raised the concern of the relation between poverty and over-population, stating that the low intellectual and moral state of all classes had brought political and economic progress of any kind to a halt.[76] Therefore, the source of any permanent good was to be found in education which would bring about a sounder morality to "prevent the evils of poverty," and,

> to put an end to the slavery to which the existing state of things condemns women; a greater object, in my estimation, both in itself & in its tendencies, than the mere physical existence either of women or men.[77]

Several incidents that occured in early 1850 drew attention to the brutality which women suffered in the conditions promoted by over-population and poverty. Added to these evils was the legal disregard for the safety and protection of women; and it was this gross omission in the judicial system which prompted Mill to engage the Morning Chronicle as one of his vehicles for protest against the blatant injustices which women were suffering daily, without hope for any redress. On March 13, 1850, an article appeared in the Morning Chronicle in which Mill made a plea for legislation to protect all unfortunate persons especially women and children from brutal treatment both at home and in their "places of work."[78] Mill was most concerned that "the progress of society in wealth, numbers, and education" had done nothing to change the "nature and amount of crime."[79] He states that though it is generally believed that man's nature has become milder, and crimes of violence against property

have decreased, yet crime reports continue to show increase in crime among the populace. Mill's major concern was that in the existent "moral turpitude, the worst order of crimes of violence" was not against equals but against "women and children, or young persons."[80] Men killed their wives by brutal treatment, sometimes instantly and sometimes over an extended period of time.

What really incensed Mill was the fact that many of these men were acquitted even in the face of clear evidence. Those who were found guilty invariably received only one or two years imprisonment for manslaughter. Many cases of brutal assault were completely ignored and even when death occurred it was ascribed to some other cause. This was an intolerable situation to Mill, who cites the case of a woman who brutally whipped a two-year-old child and was given "a fine of five pounds, or, in default of payment, two months imprisonment." As Mill sees it, a poverty-stricken woman who stole five shillings would be tried and transported if found guilty, yet "domestic tyranny," and brutality are virtually ignored. Mill believes that the "law sanctions" and "society allows" these brutalities as a matter of course; but he suggests that the demoralizing effects of these ghastly acts, when combined with the evils of overcrowding among the working classes, present a tragedy too great to contemplate. He invites an examination of these situations, however, by drawing attention to the plight of the woman who is the chief sufferer in these degrading circumstances:

> Let any one consider the degrading moral effect, in the midst of these crowded dwellings, of scenes of physical

> violence, repeated day after day--the debased, spirit-broken, down-trodden condition of the unfortunate woman, the most constant sufferer from domestic brutality in the poorer classes, unaffectedly believing herself to be out of the protection of the law--the children born and bred in this atmosphere--with the unchecked indulgence of the most odious passions, the tyranny of physical force in its coarsest manifestations, constantly exhibited as the most familiar facts of their daily life--can it be wondered if they grow up without any of the ideas and feelings which it is the purpose of moral education to infuse, without any sense of justice or affection, any concept of self-restraint--incapable in their turn of governing their children by any other means than blows?[81]

To this alarming picture of the social condition of women, Mill adds the case of a murdered maid, which reveals, most pointedly, the lack of legal protection for women. When Mary Ann Parson,[82] a maid, was beaten to death by her employers, who were acquitted because of a technicality in the medical evidence, Mill's ire reached its pinnacle. He states in the Morning Chronicle of March 26, 1850, that this maid who was brutally beaten, and starved to death, was given a final blow to the head which killed her. The culprits escaped absolutely free because it could not be determined how the fatal blow was struck or which of the two accused actually gave the death blow. This verdict is even more alarming when it is realized that the girl's body was in a progressive state of deterioration, with old and new sores, and boils and abscesses in almost every part, with massive sloughing in several areas, with cuts and bruises of all descriptions, and with most of her finger nails missing. But, in spite of this obvious evidence, plus the evidence of several persons who witnessed the abuse of the girl on several occasions, plus that of two medical experts,

the murderers were freed.[83] It is no wonder that Mill accuses the law of prejudice against women, and of exposing them to constant "domestic brutality." For, as he puts it, "the victims of domestic brutality cannot protect themselves." Even if they survive the atrocities, they have to remain in the same home with no protection from further abuses. "There is no protection for them," either in life or in death, because their murderers often escape penalty.[84]

On March 29, 1850, just three days after the case of the murdered maid, another case of brutality against a wife, who was eventually killed, stirred Mill's moral indignation. Even though a family member was a frequent witness to the constant beatings, and was present at the last beating which resulted in the death, and even though neighbours testified that they were aware of the brutality in that home and often witnessed it, the most that resulted was a verdict of manslaughter.[85] Mill found this verdict intolerable, and he pronounced on the proceedings: "It is necessary that it should be, once for all, understood by juries that to beat a human being to death is not manslaughter, but murder."[86] Mill contends that women are given far greater punishment than men for lesser crimes, and that men escape the law even after some of the vilest atrocities. Mill wishes to know why:

> Is it because juries are composed of husbands in a low rank of life, that men who kill their wives almost invariably escape -- wives who kill their husbands, never? How long will such a state of things be permitted to continue?[87]

Mill's next article on May 31, 1850, was directed at the law

and its administration. Mill condemns the state of the law, which, because of its reluctance to punish male offenders for their "domestic ruffianism," gives sanction to men to use their wives and children as possessions, with the same rights and power as if they were inanimate objects. These men are so grounded in their beliefs that they are taken by surprise when they find themselves being tried for murder. Mill believes that "ruffian-like maltreatment" should incur the severest punishment, and that, if death ensues, even though the intention was not to kill, the charge of murder should be made to stand. He says further that "the arm of the law should be made to reach the tyranny of bodily strength in every instance in which it comes to light."[88] He calls, therefore, for an Act which would declare emphatically that it is not lawful for a man to "strike his wife" any more than it is lawful for him to strike his father or his brother. Again, Mill associates the depraved conditions of women, in these overcrowded, brutal environments, with the basest conditions of slavery:

> That there should be a slavery in civilized life, from which the most savage maltreatment, judicially proved, cannot liberate the victim, would be scarcely credible, if it were not notoriously true; and such a state of things cannot, we hope, be much longer tolerated, unless existing laws are deemed more sacred than the primary ends for which all laws profess to exist.[89]

A most appropriate follow-up to these cases of brutality and injustice against women and children appeared in the Morning Chronicle of August 28, 1851. In this leading article, Mill called for the "protection of wives and children from brutal husbands and fathers,"[90]

and featured some cases of murdered wives, in which the husbands either escaped penalty or were given such light sentences that they could not fail to be encouraged to repeat their vicious acts in the future. As with other cases cited, Mill's greatest concern is with the plight of women, in these appalling conditions, and with the lack of legislative measures to protect them. It is not that Mill is not interested in the condition of the children, for theirs is a direct extension of the women's situation. Women with personal and legal rights would automatically change the condition of the children, for they could choose whether or not to have children, and into what conditions they would bring those they choose to have. Of the many cases which forced Mill to write this article, there is one most worthy of attention, for it demonstrates the lawlessness and precarious conditions in which women were living. When neighbours heard children screaming and begging their father to "let mother down," they rushed into the room to find the husband hanging his wife. In spite of his threat to succeed the next time, the case was thrown out of court because the husband testified that his wife was in the process of taking her own life while he sat and watched. The wife did not testify because of her fear of even more violence than she was accustomed to, so the case was dismissed, in spite of the neighbours having had to rescue her.

Mill's interest in the whole question of women's rights engaged him intensely; he was therefore unwilling to undertake any activity which implied a piecemeal approach to the problem. This attitude is clearly reflected in his letter of March 19, 1850, to the editor of

the Westminster Review, William E. Hickson, in which he states his reluctance to limit his scope by writing an article solely on the question of divorce. He prefers to treat divorce "as only one point in a much more extensive subject--the entire position which present laws & customs have made for women."[91] Mill explains further, that, his views on the whole subject are so diverse from the "state of existing opinion," that he would have to consider carefully what portion it would be "advisable to express" and whether the undertaking would be a "suitable or satisfactory one" to him. Mill's interest in the subject of women's rights received solid support from the October 1850 "Convention of Women" in Massachusetts "to claim equal rights." He was often as excited by the prospect of positive changes in the status of women as he was dejected by the obverse. It was in a mood of excitement that he wrote to Harriet Taylor on October 29, 1850, to inform her of the American Convention, an event destined to heighten both their spirits; for it was attended mostly by women, "but with a great number of men," and "most of the speakers were women."[92] Mill praised as unusual the small amount of "nonsense" that was uttered in relation to "good sense," and he was elated at this overwhelming public support for women's rights, and, in particular, for its conformity to his and Harriet's views. In a state of joy, tinged with both hope and pessimism, he informs her,

> as to tone it is almost like ourselves speaking--outspoken like America, not frightened & servile like England--not the least iota of compromise--asserting the whole of the principle & claiming the whole of the consequences, without any of the little feminine concessions and reserves--the thing will evidently not drop, but will

> go on till it succeeds, & I really do now think that we have a good chance of living to see something decisive really accomplished on that of all practical subjects the most important--to see that will be really looking down from Pisgah on the promised land--how little I thought we should ever see it.[93]

Mill's letter to Hickson, on March 3, 1851, about his projected article on the "Emancipation of Women,"[94] reports the existence of what seems the natural consequence of his intense interest in the whole question of women's rights. The article, promised for April of this same year, did not appear until three months later. In the meantime, however, Mill made a personal, and dramatic move to express his belief in the equality of the sexes, by signing a document, on his wedding day, March 6, 1851, to the effect that he was disclaiming and repudiating all rights, by virtue of marriage, over his wife's "person, property, and freedom of action."[95] This was a significant act which had profound moral implications; for although the "legal power and control" of a husband over his wife were not affected by this gesture, the act of publicly repudiating these powers gave weight to Mill's high-minded views on marriage, and the status of women in general. It also showed that virtuous persons, if willing, could rise above the general concensus and survive the consequences.

It is understandable, then, that with this passionate desire for women's rights, Mill should take to task those who undermine women's capabilities. His letter of April 14, 1851, to Hickson, complaining of the poor quality of the new editorship of the Westminster Review,

also reflects his disdain for a reviewer's attitude on the rights of women and children. He tells Hickson:

> In the midst of the vapid want of meaning, only two things stand out prominently: one of these is a very vulgar attack on H. Martineau's book for irreligion--the other, . . is a denunciation of the author of "Social Statics" for "pushing his conclusions too far" on the "rights of women and children" from not perceiving with sufficient clearness that no one can have a valid claim to a right without the capacity of performing its correlative duty"--the article I proposed to you on the rights of women narrowly missed being bound up with this despicable trash![96]

Mill's moral indignation was stirred even more intensely in his letter to Sir George Grey, Home Secretary, on May 5, 1851, concerning the bill to restrict the sale of poison to all women. Mill was shocked at this "gross insult to every woman in the country."[97] To Mill, this "'monstrous proposition' implied that 'all women, from the highest to the lowest,' had been 'declared unfit to have poison in their possession, lest they should commit murder.'"[98] Mill saw this bill as a retrograde step in the move towards freedom for women; for in a society in which it had been so difficult to gain even the smallest concessions for the elevation of women's status, such an indictment against them was "a return to the ideas and practices of barbarous ages."[99] As Mill puts it:

> While the spirit of the age & the tendency of all improvement is to make women the equal of men, this bill puts on them the stamp of the most degrading inferiority, precisely where the common voice of mankind proclaims them superior--in moral goodness.[100]

Furthermore, if all the restrictions of this bill applied equally to men and women, it would be giving justice to all, but not without the insulting and dependable results of restricting personal freedom, and "treating all mankind, except the government & its agents, as children."[101] As Mill sees it, then,

> a law which if common to both would be merely a specimen of timidity & over caution, is when limited to women, a legislative declaration that Englishwomen are poisoners--Englishwomen as a class--as distinguished from Englishmen.[102]

Not only passionate about the rights of women, Mill showed unusual sensitivity in his desire for correct language about the subject. His letter of May 1851, to Hickson, about the naming of the proposed article on women, clearly demonstrates this point. Mill suggests that his choice of a name was "Enfranchisement of Women," because Hickson's choice with the word "sex" in it would never do.[103] To Mill, "that word is enough to vulgarize a whole review. It is almost as bad as 'female!'"[104] So, "Enfranchisement of Women" it was; and it appeared in the Westminster Review, July 1851.[105] This article was written by Harriet Taylor, with the endorsement of Mill who no doubt shared her convictions. It closely presents Mill's opinions, and was presumably the result of mutual effort and discussion. Mill attributes the writing to Harriet but clearly regards the work as a joint production. It was intended to inform the English public about the Massachusetts "Women's Rights Convention" which so excited Mill's hopes for the future of women.[106] It also showed how much more advanced American women were, than English women and their society as a

whole, in their push for equality. Harriet was particularly impressed with the fact that the Convention was a "movement not merely for women, but by them."[107] Even more impressively, "the president was a woman."[108] Because the aim of the movement was towards "political and social reform" it gained even greater importance in Harriet's eyes, for she believed that this was the right approach. She greatly approved the uncompromising, concise, and far-reaching extent of the principles the American women adopted, and particularly the directness of their foremost demands for full educational opportunities, economic partnership, and a "coequal share" in all aspects of lawmaking and administration.[109]

Harriet regarded the justice of these demands as indisputable, for they were championed in the "Declaration of Independence" even though the society had seen fit to live in contradiction of their most cherished maxim, the inalienable rights of all to have "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."[110] So, Harriet condemned the moral turpitude of the American society, which engaged in slavery of the black race and of all women. But the British did not escape her wrath, for she attacked those who were campaigning for "Universal suffrage" while denying the suffrage to women as if they were not one "half of the human species."[111] The Chartists were such offenders and Harriet comments with irony on their elitism and self-interest:

> The Chartist who denies the suffrage to women, is a Chartist only because he is not a lord: he is one of those levellers who would level only down to themselves.[112]

Harriet also attacks the evident contradictions in the British Constitution, because even though the English axiom of freedom suggests

that "taxation and representation" should be "coextensive," the law gives a married woman's "property to her husband" while an unmarried woman with property is obliged to pay taxes. Harriet fails to see how the law justifies the violation of the fundamental doctrine of the British Constitution which states that all persons should be tried by their peers: for as it stands, women are tried by male judges and male juries, yet foreigners are given the privilege to be tried by a jury which is composed of one half from among themselves.[113] Harriet argues that "in all things the presumption ought to be on the side of equality,"[114] yet custom has made it such that "women never have had equal rights with men."[115] She found it most remarkable that even with the march of civilization, and the unquestionable progress of mankind, three quarters of the world's population still closed discussion on the status of women, because they believed that women's condition was rightfully determined by tradition. Harriet states that though "great thinkers. . . from Plato to Condorcet, besides some of the most eminent names of the present age, have made emphatic protests in favour of the equality of women,"[116] and although voluntary "religious, and secular" societies have also acknowledged the principle of equal rights for women, the problem is that "there has been no political community or nation in which women have not been in a state of political and civil inferiority."[117] But, as Harriet sees it, women's subjection was established by force, and since slavery and "monarchical despotism," which depended on the same principle of force, were gradually being eradicated, so must the enslavement of women.

Harriet rejects the view that the "proper sphere of women is not in politics or publicity, but in the private and domestic life."[118] She believes that this is just a feeble excuse to keep women from attaining self-development, for no individual has the right to decide what the "proper sphere" is for another. "The proper sphere for all human beings is the largest and highest which they are able to attain."[119] The ideas of freedom of choice and fair competition Harriet sees as fundamental for the improvement of women's status. As she suggests,

> there need be no fear that women will take out of the hands of men any occupation which men perform better than they. Each individual will prove his or her capacities, in the only way in which capacities can be proved--by trial; and the world will have the benefit of the best faculties of all its inhabitants.[120]

Harriet objects, then, to the arbitrary limits set on the development of women, and which are used as the basis for assuming that qualities not exhibited by women do not exist. She goes on to show that women have proved their inabilities in exactly the proportion in which they have been allowed to exercise them. Harriet finds it a "curious anomaly" that though women are

> ineligible to hold even the lowest offices of State, they are in some countries admitted to the highest of all, the regal; and if there is any one function for which they have shown a decided vocation, it is that of reigning.[121]

Harriet counters the specious arguments against women's involvement in public life and politics, by showing that not only does the knowledge of the feats of the heroic women, down through the ages, de-

molish those theories, but the history of great queens and other powerful women show conclusively that, given political freedom, women can accomplish whatever they attempt, all things being equal. Harriet rejects the claims that women are unfit for active life because it is incompatible with their natural roles as mothers and wives; she rejects further the view that public life hardens the character of women; and she also rejects the idea that their presence in the marketplace creates undue competition and is a strain on the already burdened economy. Harriet advances the rather modern view that it is important for every woman's self-respect and independence to have a share in the family's income, no matter how small. She makes the astute suggestion that much of the brutality among the working classes would not occur if the women were free to earn, "and had the right to possess" a part of the family's income.[122] If women worked, children could be freed from industrial toil and be educated: and the substitution, women for children, would diminish any overloading of the market.

Harriet thinks it is time that women stop accepting weakness of mind and body as attractive traits, because their subjection has been for no other reason than because "men like it" to be so.[123] She deems repulsive the idea that "the paramount virtue of womanhood is loyalty to men,"[124] and even worse the view that man's moral code demands "self-will" and "self-assertion" while women's moral code demands "abnegation of self, patience, resignation, and submission of power, unless when resistance is demanded by other interests than her own."[125] Harriet speaks of the "reciprocity of obligation" which has lessened

domestic tyranny among upper and middle classes but which has brought a new evil. The correlative obligation which was ever increasing between man and woman gives each a claim on the other, while the state of continued dependency in which women live makes the new companionship not that of equals but of a higher and a lower person. This state of affairs is detrimental to both parties, for as Harriet sees it, in order to be a companion to a deficient wife the husband is forced to lessen his intellectual abilities, and his "masculine excellences."[126] Harriet continues with a rather specious argument, depending on slippery definitions of manliness. She contends that

> those who are so careful that women should not become men, do not see that men are becoming, what they have decided that women should be--are falling into the feebleness which they have so long cultivated in their companions. Those who are associated in their lives, tend to become assimilated in character. In the present closeness of association between the sexes, men cannot retain manliness unless women acquire it.[127]

Even though this argument on the relation between character integration and manliness is indeed quite flimsy, Harriet is nevertheless correct in her call for communication between active minds, not one active and one passive. For as she says, while women continue to have no freedom to develop and expand,

> high mental powers in women will be but an exceptional accident, until every career is open to them, and until they, as well as men, are educated for themselves and for the world--not one sex for another.[128]

Harriet criticizes the superficial education given to women whereby they are taught only the surface of deep and serious subjects. This

allows them no opportunity to develop as intellectual human beings because they are prevented from exercising their power of thought. Harriet resents the idea that women are told from infancy that thought belongs to others; therefore they must cultivate the virtues of agreeableness and weakmindedness. She suggests that while the common opinion is that women's moral influence is effective in countering man's selfishness, the mere position of a subordinate in any union is most conducive to the growth of selfishness. She resents the fact, and rightly so, that

> the most insignificant of men, the man who can obtain influence or consideration nowhere else, finds one place where he is chief and head. There is one person, often greatly his superior in understanding, who is obliged to consult him, and whom he is not obliged to consult. He is judge, magistrate, ruler, over their joint concerns; arbiter of all differences between them. The justice or conscience to which her appeal is made, is his justice and conscience: it is his to hold the balance and adjust the scales between his own claims or wishes and those of another. His is now the only tribunal, in civilized life, in which the same person is judge and party.[129]

Harriet favours an open and frank relationship in which the parties are able to relate as friends and intellectual equals, thus intelligent women would not have to resort to artifice in order to survive their "present physical and moral state." The alternative union of unequals can only result in unhappiness or indifference, for as Harriet views it, the evils of inferior social and sympathetic influences are deterioration and vulgarization of the mental processes. For this reason, Harriet demands progress in the emancipation of women, which will benefit not only women, but all of society. The general belief that

women do not wish to be freed from their subjection, Harriet regards as absurd, because if women seem content with their lot, it is the result of custom which can harden human beings "to any kind of degradation, by deadening the part of their nature which would resist it."[130] Women must therefore cease to depend on men for all their needs; they must refuse to accept the teaching that "to repel actively even an admitted injustice done to themselves, is somewhat unfeminine, and had better be left to some male friend or protector."[131] Thus, Harriet concludes her far-sighted treatise, which might be considered Mill's first major public statement, devoted exclusively to the rights of women, with the injunction: "What is wanted for women is equal admission to all social privileges; not a position apart, a sort of sentimental priesthood."[132] Mill and Harriet did not believe, like so many "vulgar men" that "learning makes women unfeminine, and that literary ladies are likely to be bad wives."[133]

This brief summary of the "Enfranchisement of Women" shows that both Mill and Harriet were truly ahead of their time. They saw into the very heart of the social problems of women, and had the wisdom and courage to determine and to advocate progressive solutions, without fear of censorship from those who upheld the submissiveness and inferiority of women. Although neither Mill nor Harriet wished it to be seen as the best they could do or think on the subject, and intended it only as the "groundwork of a fuller treatise," the much later Subjection of Women, "it is remarkable," as Packe says, "in the breath of its claim for equal rights in property, in occupation, and especially in family status, at a time when women were only just making the first tentative petitions for a vote."[134]

From the public declaration of his views on the whole spectrum of women's problems, and his appeal for legislation against brutality, Mill returns to his private campaign in which he attacks undesirable views about women, and attempts to sway the opinions of those whose influence could assist the cause of women. In his letter of April 8, 1852, to Professor Henry Green, Superintendent of Government Schools in Gujarat, India, Mill returns to the issue of overpopulation and the slavery of women, objecting specifically to Green's views that it does not matter how large a family a person has so long as he is able to support them, and raises them to support themselves.[135] Mill insists that the support of the family is only a small part of the whole issue, and that, the major consideration is, without any doubt, the "degradation" and "slavery" of women which is such an enormous evil, and "contributes so much to the perpetuation of all other evils by keeping down the moral" and "intellectual condition of both men and women."[136] Mill rebukes Green rather sharply for claiming, or more correctly, for boasting, that his wife had made him a happy father rather more frequently than he was pleased to remember. Mill deems this an example of the gross depravity women suffer, for,

> such phrases are an attempt to laugh off the fact that a wife is in every sense the victim of the man's animal instinct & not the less so because she is brought up to think that she has no right of refusal or even of complaint.[137]

During the next phase of Mill's life, his interest in the problems of women was centered dominantly on the issue of political rights. Even though other concerns were given the necessary attention, the

central push was towards gaining the suffrage for women, because Mill believed that after women acquired this right all other rights would be forthcoming. There was also a sense of urgency about the matter because the new Reform Bill of 1867 was being framed and Mill wanted to make sure that women were included in the new voting legislations. It was to this end that Mill wrote to Lord Monteagle, the Whig statesman, on March 20, 1853, "in acknowledgement of his pamphlet on Representation of Minorities," and with the request that the franchise be opened "to women who fulfil the same conditions on which it is granted to men; in the same manner as they already vote for boards of guardians."[138] He added the reassurance that women "have as much interest in good laws as men have, and would vote at least as well."[139] Mill had high hopes for the passage of the Reform Bill, which might mean so much to women, and he was pleasantly assured of its success when certain clauses affecting women remained after the debates. In his letter to Harriet of February 2, 1854, he expressed his pleasure that "the will and marriage causes" were to be moved from the "ecclesiastical courts," thereby making them civil matters.[140]

Mill's interest in the rights of women was not restricted to his public statements and activities, or to his letter writing. "On January 8, 1854, Mill tried the experiment of keeping a diary, in which he might commit one thought to paper each day. The diary ends abruptly on April 15."[141] To Mill, "no mere speciality, either of science or practice, can count as a thought," so, he devoted his daily entries to thoughts that "either relate to life, to feeling, or

to high metaphysical speculation."[142] Feelings on the status of women were among the many topics for his daily consideration, as seen in his comment on women's position in nunneries and in marriages. Interested by a parliamentary enquiry to determine if young women were being detained in nunneries, Mill, in his diary entry for March 1, 1854, observes that there is a striking parallel between the conditions for entry into nunneries, and those for entry into marriage.[143] The amazing thing is that almost unconsciously, one speaker after another damned for the nunneries the very conditions that were held up as the cornerstone of marriage. One speaker stated that "a vow is contrary to the English Constitution and a violation of the personal freedom which is the right of every one."[144] Another speaker spoke on the "hardship of allowing young women under age to bind themselves by an irrevocable engagement when they cannot know what they are binding themselves to."[145] Mill finds the blindness inherent in these statements quite amazing as he declares:

> What a sad absence of habitual reflection on the commonest human affairs is shown by its never occurring to these people to how far more true this is of marriage; and the marriage vow too is legally binding, which the other, in this country, is not.[146]

On March 26, 1854, Mill entered his views on sex, and its proper place in human relations.[147] And even though he is variously thought of as being undersexed, and too moral, his views are nevertheless quite liberal; in fact, one might say progressively modern. His view is that the excessive preoccupation with the "animal instinct of sex" was a hindrance to "any great improvement in human life." He suggests

two things to correct this evil:

> Firstly, that women should cease to be set apart for this function, and should be admitted to all other duties and occupations on a par with men; secondly, that what any persons may freely do with respect to sexual relations should be deemed to be an unimportant and purely private matter, which concerns no one but themselves.[148]

Mill was obviously advocating a free society in which people would choose their partners on a mutual and voluntary basis, and in which societal interference would have no place, except where there are children, when the full force of society should intervene. The success of such a society would depend very much on each person's capacity for moral restraint, but Mill sees this as the mode of the future and predicts that existing marriage arrangements "will one day be thought one of the superstitions and barbarisms of the infancy of the human race."[149] On March 29, 1854, Mill made an entry in his diary about the quality of persons who are capable of appreciating equality in relationships.[150] Mill's free society would need an abundance of "high-minded" persons in order to succeed, because only they "are capable of strong and durable attachments to their equals."[151] The "vulgarest natures" find equality disagreeable and are generally contented with superiors or inferiors.

In his April 5, 1854 letter to Harriet, Mill was rather incensed with a "creature named Bowyer" apparently Sir George Bowyer, jurist and politician, who got permission in the House of Commons to present "a bill to abolish actions for damages in case of breach of the marriage contract" and to "make it a criminal offence

instead."[152] This was a setback for women, even though a small concession was given, "making the wife a defendant as well as the man that she may be heard in her own behalf & the two men not allowed as they are now to blacken her character unopposed."[153] Mill was disappointed with this retrograde step in laws affecting women, but he was somewhat encouraged by a "conservative" who ordered Bowyer to give up such "nonsense" and recommend to the Divorce Commission "to make divorce easier."[154] In his letter of April 10, 1854, Mill again mentions the Bowyer Bill to Harriet, but this time he condemns the Examiner for supporting a Bill that was unfavourable to women and their freedom to divorce their spouses.[155] On November 9, 1855, he had the opportunity to reiterate his opinion on divorce, in a letter to an unidentified correspondent stating that

> respecting the rights of women (not Woman) I need not say I wish you success. My opinion on Divorce is that any relaxation of the irrevocability of marriage would be an improvement, nothing ought to be ultimately rested in, short of entire freedom on both sides to dissolve this like any other partnership. The only thing requiring legal regulation would be the maintenance of the children when the parents could not arrange it amicably--& in that I do not see any considerable difficulty.[156]

The question of suffrage was ever present as the basis for women's freedom, for expectations were rapidly increasing that the pending Reform Bill would give women the vote. So, Mill continued in his determination to change public opinion. He made this clear in his letter of July 8, 1858, to Judge Chapman, "the Prime Minister of the colony of Victoria," and advocate of universal suffrage, that he disapproved the attitude of Australians towards

women's suffrage.[157] He objected to the "Toryism of sex," and suggested that there could be no 'universal' suffrage until women were included; for, there was only one thing worse than naming a suffrage universal that was limited to men, it was the "vulgar and insulting expression of 'manhood suffrage,'" which "asserts the exclusion of women as a doctrine."[158] Mill also sent a letter to James Lorimer, Scottish jurist and philosopher, March 3, 1859, requesting that women be included in the ultimate universal suffrage, for it appears that Lorimer had prepared a "treatise" on "Equal Representation" but had conveniently excluded women, and Mill was not about to tolerate this exclusion.[159] February 1859 saw the publication of Mill's pamphlet, "Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform," which he hoped would influence the pending Reform Bill.[160] Mill suggested that to improve the representative system, all householders including "all five-pound householders," should be given the vote "without distinction of sex."[161] For, as he puts it, "why should the vote-collector make a distinction where the tax-gatherer makes none?"[162] Mill made the plea for women's suffrage also on the ground that as an excluded class, they could not depend on male voters to defend their interests since they were already regarded as having no rights.[163] On behalf of women, Mill concluded that

> when all are fit to rate votes, and when all men and women are admitted to vote, in virtue of their fitness, --then there can no longer be danger of class legislation; then the electors, being the nation, can have no interest apart from the general interest.[164]

Mill continued his private campaign for women's suffrage, but it

was the public event of his nomination and later election to Parliament which gave the added push and brought him near success with this vitally important issue. Mill was rapidly gaining popularity as a public figure, so it was not surprising when in March 1865 he received a letter asking him whether "he would be willing to stand as Parliamentary Candidate for Westminster at the forthcoming General Election, if a circular letter should reveal a general desire among the electors for his nomination."[165] Mill was ambivalent. He had refused to stand as an Irish representative in 1851, chiefly because of his enormous responsibilities at India House (a job which disqualified him from public office anyway), and because of his pending marriage and the desire for "peace and privacy." With these reasons no longer present, Mill was tempted, for as Packe says,

> this was a free invitation to stand for Westminster; and Westminster to a Liberal was like Mecca to the Moslems, the heart of a tradition. He had a great desire for practical achievement. The struggles of the Reform Bill era, his part with the Philosophical Radicals and the Westminster Review, were still fresh in his mind, though other things had intervened. He was immensely flattered at the spontaneous determination of the Westminster electors, and fully conscious of his duty to respond to the call of his fellow citizens.[166]

In spite of this exciting possibility for active reform, Mill was unsure whether he could serve his public more effectively in or out of Parliament. He nevertheless agreed to stand for nomination, if the electors so wished it, on condition that they consented to his extraordinarily severe terms. First, "that if elected he would not undertake the charge of any local interest." Second, he wished

to be free to promote in Parliament the "opinions expressed in his writings," and to "elaborate them as might be required;" and to uphold party loyalty only so far as telling the "constituents the votes he intended to give and his reasons for them." Third, "he would not advertise or offer himself to the constituents in any manner." Fourth, "he would not pay a pennyworth towards the cost of his election, because it was a scandal that only rich men could afford a seat in Parliament, and because the enormous expense deterred many of the best candidates from running"[167] -- a most valid opinion on a serious problem that has not been solved even to this day.

Packe reports that when this unique communication was published in the Daily News for 23 March 1865, the result was that Mill's name "leapt into national prominence." Of course, there were sceptics such as "a well-known figure" who "was heard to say that God Almighty would have no chance of being elected on such a programme." But, demand for Mill's books "soared," and prices were brought within the reach of the working classes, a thing Mill had always insisted upon. There was even "talk of a complete edition of his works." Other responses were also immediate and dramatic. For instance, "the students of St. Andrews University elected him, without consulting him, as their Lord Rector, and were not dismayed at hearing they would have to wait a year for his inaugural address."[168] The Westminster electors accepted Mill with all his conditions, and nominated him as their parliamentary candidate. They immediately started a "subscription to pay for his campaign." A most

remarkable achievement by a remarkable man. Mill did nothing to help in the campaign, and absented himself from the country until just three weeks before the election. Notwithstanding, he won his seat with a fair majority over his opponent on 12 July 1865.[169]

During the period between nomination and election, Mill did not sit silently waiting for Parliament, in order to continue his efforts on behalf of women. He had specific views about what he intended to accomplish in Parliament, if elected. At this time, Mill changed his approach from the stormy protests and moral indignation seen in much of his earlier correspondences, to the calm assertive position of declaring his political opinions. This was the attitude with which he wrote to James Beal, auctioneer and land agent, radical politician and reformer, on April 17, 1865. Mill informed Beal that his first intention, if elected, was to vote for supporters of the suffrage who favoured women; and then to open the suffrage to all "grown persons, men and women, who can read, write, and perform a sum in the rule of three, and who have not within a small number of years received parish relief."[170] Still elated by his successful nomination, and chortling at his stroke of genius, Mill wrote to Edwin Chadwick, the sanitation reformer, whom he would sooner have had take his place in the election, if it were possible. In this letter of May 15, 1865, Mill spoke about the election campaign, and said this of his nomination:

> I have gained this by it, that what are thought the most out-of-the-way of all my opinions, have been and are discussed and canvassed from one end of the country to the other, and some of them (especially

> women's voting) are obtaining many unexpected adhesions. I reckon this a good stroke of practicality, whether I am elected to Parliament or not.[171]

Mill continued his optimism for the success of women's suffrage, and conveyed this in his letter of May 30, 1865, to the founder of the Union and Emancipation Society, Max Kyllman, a native German who lived in Manchester. Mill had written to Kyllman on February 15 of this same year, flatly refusing to have anything to do with universal suffrage "unless the inclusion of women were distinctly and openly proclaimed as a substantive part of the design." Mill regarded the agitation for manhood suffrage as "mischievous," and suggested that every time the name is pronounced in public, "save in contempt or execration, an additional rivet is added to the chain of half the human species."[172] In his later letter, Mill was now particularly encouraged by the amount of debate, and frequent approval, being given to a number of parliamentary issues, and especially to the subject of women's suffrage, which was being greeted with "much less hostility than was expected."[173]

Mill took his seat in Parliament, with the determination to do all in his power to get the vote for women and to effect social reforms that would change their subjected condition. He was also interested in the involvement of women in the plea for suffrage, and it was to this end that a letter of May 6, 1866, written by Helen Taylor on his behalf, was addressed. In reply to a letter from a Mrs. Caroline Liddell, who advocated "Women's Suffrage," but claimed that she was not strong-minded enough to attend the election meetings,

Mill gave his views on the importance of women's involvement in the issue. He felt that the lack of interest shown by women in their own cause was responsible for the slow progress, because those men who opposed the move for suffrage, used women's supposed indifference as an excuse. They said that the "ladies themselves see no hardship" in their lack of status, "and do not care enough for the franchise to ask for it."[174] Mill felt that this was most unfortunate because many Parliamentary members were willing to grant the suffrage to women, and many more would be too "ashamed to refuse it" if women "quietly and steadily demanded it by themselves."[175] Mill regretted Mrs. Liddell's opinion of herself, and suggested that every woman should employ whatever "mental powers and energies" she possessed "in striving to remove the evils with which circumstances have made [her] acquainted."[176] Moreover, "a woman who is a taxpayer is the most natural and most suitable advocate of the political enfranchisement of women."[177]

Though Mill was passionate in his desire to gain the suffrage for women, he was not unaware of the obstacles that stood in the way of such an achievement, nor was he unrealistic in his expectations, as he showed in his letter to Darby Griffith, M.P., June 9, 1866, in which he discussed his strategy for presenting the subject of women's suffrage to Parliament. Mill expressed happiness in having Griffith as a supporter of this issue, and he went on to suggest how important it was to exercise prudence in approaching Parliament on the subject. As there was "no chance" of having the admission of women to the suffrage introduced with the present Reform Bill, be-

cause of the need for "a much greater amount of support in the country than we should have if we attempted it at present," Mill thought it best to give notice that the subject would be opened that year, then leave the ground clear for other matters, thus avoiding further "accusation of obstructiveness," and the possibility of creating further antagonism against the Cause.[178] In response to Richard Russell, of Islington (not otherwise identified), who feared that the franchise for women might result in women eventually being elected to Parliament, where they might "have their own way," Mill sent a reply, again written by Helen Taylor, on March 6, 1867. In substance, it claimed that there was no fear of women being elected to Parliament when they did not yet have the vote, and that even if women were elected for that office, present sentiments would render their "presence there perfectly harmless." Further, Mill asserted that there was "less force" in the argument about women having their own way in Parliament on points of differences, "than the similar objection to the working classes, because men and women are much more likely to be evenly balanced in number than the poor and the rich." Mill objected to the idea of a "subordinate house of representatives for women," and to all class segregation.[179] He continued:

> I cannot see how arranging that men shall always have their own way in everything can in justice be the proper way to prevent women from occasionally having theirs. There is a more even balance between men and women than between any other two classes, and therefore the attainment of justice through equal representation may be more easily trusted to the reason and right feeling of the best among each, acting as a check to violence or party feeling on either side.[180]

Mill's appeal for equality of rights for women, and his "concern for the birth and growth of the Suffragette movement," gained unexpected stimulus when at that historic moment

> on 20 May 1867, during the debate on the Reform Bill, he rose to move that the word "man" should be replaced by the word "person," [and] the question of a woman's right to vote was heard for the first time in modern history in the legislative assembly of a civilized country. The boisterous humour of the House of Commons at first saw only what they took to be the absurdity of the subject, but as he proceeded they found themselves compelled to listen. It was a wise and reasoned discourse, appealing to expediency more than to justice. He demolished all the obvious objections, that politics were not a woman's business, that women did not want to vote, that they preferred to wield the immense indirect power they had always had, or that they were already represented by the votes of their natural protectors. And he sketched the happy effects on family life of making men and women frank and confident companions. When he finished, after a short debate, a division was taken. There was a certain amount of buffoonery in the lobbies, and many who had promised to support Mill did not dare to face the ridicule. Even so, when the figures were announced, it was found he had got as many as 73 votes, or almost a third of the thin attendance.[181]

Packe further explains the outcome of this dramatic event in the history of the struggle for women's equality:

> Mill was very pleased. He had never expected that his motion would be carried: he had only meant to advertise it. His speech had been intended not as a climax but as an overture: not as a defiant Parthian shot, but as the first action in a carefully planned campaign. So far the opposition had been slight, and even crumbly.[182]

In fact, the crux of the matter was emphatically stated in the con-

clusion of the preamble to Mill's speech in which he affirmed:

> Sir, within the limits of our Constitution, there is a solitary case. There is no other example of an exclusion which is absolute. If the law denied a vote to all but the possessors of £5,000 a year, the poorest man in the nation might--and now and then would--acquire the suffrage; but neither birth, nor fortune, nor merit, nor exertion, nor intellect, nor even that great disposer of human affairs, accident, can ever enable any woman to have her voice counted in those national affairs which touch her and hers as nearly as any other person in the nation.[183]

Mill's efforts, and the exposure given the cause by virtue of his parliamentary motion, were effective in moving forward the campaign for women's suffrage; but progress was slow, and in spite of the Representation of the People Act of 1918, women in England did not get the vote on equal terms with men until 1928. In the meantime, however, Mill had to contend with many who were anxious about what women with the franchise would become. To one such letter, Mill replied on May 27, 1867, reassuring the writer, Archdeacon John Allen, that he did not

> anticipate that women would be made less valuable in the home by having their minds directed to the great concerns of mankind, but quite the contrary wherever men's minds are employed as much as they ought to be on those great concerns.[184]

Not least among the apprehensive were other women who feared that their sex could not handle the responsibilities which the suffrage would confer upon them. Thus Mill had the occasion to reply to an unidentified correspondent, a woman, who opposed the suffrage for women. In his letter of June 2, 1867, Mill tells her,

> I am sorry that the Representation of Women has not the benefit of your support. No doubt, there are plenty of women, as there are men, who are at present very insufficiently qualified for the exercise of political judgement; but their exclusion from the suffrage does more than anything else to perpetuate the incapacity, by stamping it with the approbation of Society. The removal of that stamp would make women feel entitled to exercise their minds on politics, and they would very soon know quite as much on the subject as men know; which they never will do while society and the law warn them off the ground.[185]

Even more surprising, was Florence Nightingale, whom Mill took to task for suggesting that women would be better off struggling to eradicate many of the individual social evils rather than continue the impossible fight for suffrage. This was a sore point with Mill, who firmly believed that women's hope for equality rested on political liberty, from which all other freedoms would proceed. Mill in a letter of December 31, 1867, expressed regrets that so many good women accepted a do-nothing attitude, or took a back-stage position in the struggle for women's rights rather than using their talents to actively participate. He proceeded to lecture Miss Nightingale on the many social, domestic, and educational disadvantages that women were suffering, because of their own submissiveness, their suppression by husbands and families, and their lack of political rights. Mill regretted the false appearances of which so many good women were fond, and expressed amazement at the presumption with which "persons who think themselves humble set bounds to the capacities of improvement of their fellow creatures--think themselves qualified to define how much or how little of the divine light of truth can be borne by the

world in general."[186] On the question of political partisanship being dangerous for women, Mill adds,

> No doubt, if women can never do anything in politics except for and through men, they cannot be partisans against men. No doubt, where you have death, you have none of the troubles of life. But if women were to prove possessed with ever so great a spirit of partisanship, and were they to call forth their ever so intense partisanship on the part of men, and were they, as the weakest, to be driven to any extremities, I don't see that the result would be very different from what it is at present, inasmuch as I apprehend that the present position of women in every country in the world is exactly measured by the personal and family affections of men, and that every modification for the better in women's absolute annihilation and servitude is at present owing not to any sense of abstract right or justice on the part of men, but to their sense of what they would like for their own wives, daughters, mothers, and sisters. Political partnership against the mass of women will not, among civilized men, diminish the sense of what is due to the objects of their private affections. But I believe, on the contrary, that the dignity given to women in general by the very fact of their being able to be political partisans, is likely to be itself a means of raising men's estimation of what is due to them. So that, if men come to look upon women as a large number of unamiable but powerful opponents and a small number of dearly loved and charming persons, I think men will think more highly of women, and will feel less disposed to use badly any superior power that after all they themselves may still possess, than if they look upon women as I think men generally do at present, as a few dearly loved, preeminently worthy and charming persons, and a great number of helpless fools....[187]

Mill issued the call for heroism and martyrdom on behalf of women's freedom, by asserting that,

> I know that this is not pleasant to the sensitive character fostered by the present influences among the best women; but it is to me a question whether the noble and, as I think heroic enthusiasm of truth and public good ought not in this age to nerve women to as

> courageous a sacrifice of their most justly cherished delicacy as that of which the early Christian women left an example for the reverent love and admiration of all future time.[188]

The passion with which Mill assailed Miss Nightingale for her unfavourable views about women's suffrage is indicative of the zeal he felt for the cause, and the heightened anticipation he had of its success. Soon after his motion in Parliament, he had written to his friend and disciple, John Elliot Cairnes, the economist, on June 30, 1867:

> I never expected any better reception in Parliament or the press for Personal Representation than it has met with. Considerable good has notwithstanding been done, and the plan is becoming known, and obtaining serious consideration from many who had not previously attended to it. The Women's question has been a most decided and important success, and it is truly astonishing how the right opinion is spreading both among women and men since the debate. We are now forming a Society in London for the Representation of Women, and hope to get others formed in Edinburgh, Dublin and elsewhere (there is already a most efficient one in Manchester, which obtained the majority of the 13500 signatures to this year's petitions). The proposed society will probably be composed of an executive committee of ladies, a General Committee of both sexes subscribing one guinea a year, which will be the ultimate governing body, and ordinary members who will only subscribe a small sum per annum, will receive the reports and circulars, but have no part of the management. The chief members of the Executive Committee will be Mrs. P.A. Taylor, Miss Cobbe, Mrs. Stansfeld and Mrs. Fawcett. My daughter and I will be on the General Committee. Will you and Mrs. Cairnes give us leave to put your name upon it? and can you give any help for the formation of a Society in Dublin?[189]

Things were moving rapidly indeed, so on July 4, 1867, Mill wrote to the vice-president of the New Hampshire Woman Suffrage

Association, Parker Pilsbury, journalist and reformer, stating that

> the unexpectedly large minority which the proposal obtained, and the thought and discussion which it excited in quarters where the subject had never been thought of before, have given an immense impulse to the question. Numbers of men and women in all ranks have since given in their adhesion to the movement; and agreement with it is rapidly becoming a badge of advanced liberalism.190

The National Association was formed, and announced in the papers of July 6, 1867, as "The London National Society for Woman Suffrage." But Mill and Helen were both displeased with this name and threatened to withdraw unless it was changed. On July 22, the Committee yielded and the name was altered to "The London National Society for Women's Suffrage."[191]

Mill did not gain the suffrage for women, and he was thwarted in his parliamentary efforts by the fall of the government ("on 30 April 1868 Gladstone defeated Disraeli on the Disestablishment of the Irish Church"), and his own defeat at the polls in November of the same year. The defeat was occasioned by strong resentments to many of his principles and public acts for reform, and by the "superiority of the Tory party mechanism" and their massive wealth.[192] However, Mill did not relent in his efforts. In reaction to the new Parliament's unfavourable attitude to Women's Suffrage, he wrote to Alfred Steinthal of the Manchester Women's Suffrage Committee, on December 1, 1868, advocating an "extensively signed petition" by women and all their male supporters. But equally important was Mill's idea that if women could not persevere in the

continual petitioning necessary to bring them freedom, then they were perhaps, as many believed, not yet ready for political rights. He adds, it

> seems very advisable to show women that they have a means in their own hands of quietly and steadily pressing their claims upon the legislature, and encourage them to begin that great lesson of steady, silent, persevering effort by which every class and nation has to be fitted for freedom.[193]

Mill's fame as a champion of women's rights was well known, and his reply to a letter from an Australian admirer shows how pleased he was to be recognized for his efforts. However, Mill did not allow praise or flattery to cloud his observation of any omissions by his admirers. In his letter of December 7, 1868, he gracefully thanked Archibald (later Sir Archibald) Michie, London-born Australian jurist and politician, for his sentiments of appreciation, then proceeded to inform him that if his rising and important community of Victoria "could be induced to adopt" the "great social improvement" of Women's Suffrage, then it would be among the great colonies that had surpassed the "Mother Country" in social and political reforms.[194] Mill's pride in his work for women is even more clearly expressed in his reply of December 12, 1868, to a letter from the President of the Edinburgh Women's Suffrage Society, offering condolences on his "defeat at Westminister." He acknowledges the tribute paid to him then sets out to examine his accomplishments during his short tenure as a member of parliament. He says:

> Of all my recollections connected with the House of Commons, that of my having had the honour of being the first to make the claim of women to the suffrage a Parliamentary question, is the most gratifying, as I believe it to have been the most important, public service that circumstances made it in my power to render.[195]

He went on to inform the president that not only would he continue to do all in his power to promote the cause, but that there were many "supporters among the best men in the House of Commons to carry on as much of the contest as can be conducted there." All women would have to do their part, however, because the men who were working in their interest needed the moral support of intelligent women.[196]

Mill's optimism, his sense of imminent success, were well founded because various women's movements had sprung up all over the country, and were rapidly gaining ground. On January 1, 1869, Mill wrote to Parke Godwin, writer on public affairs, expressing the opinion that the emancipation of women was one of the two great changes that would regenerate society, the other being "co-operative production."[197] It was in this same mood of confidence that Mill wrote to Pasquale Villari, Italian historian and statesman, on March 19, 1869, declaring that the cause was "making very rapid progress," and that with the enthusiasm of the great number of "distinguished women" who had rallied to the call, success seemed barely three years away.[198] With this air of excitement generating everywhere around Mill, he felt it opportune to strike the next blow on behalf of women. In the spring of 1869, Mill published <u>The Subjection</u>

of Women, his most powerful, and most controversial document on the issue of women's rights, which he "kept lying by him for eight years awaiting the decisive kindling moment."[199]

The reception of The Subjection varied from shock among Mill's friends to even greater hostility among the already hostile. "Of anything Mill ever wrote" says Packe, "The Subjection of Women aroused the most antagonism."[200] James Fitzjames Stephen, writer, lawyer, judge, hater of democracy, and staunch opponent of many of Mill's principles, declared, in Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, that the topic of equality in The Subjection illustrated "one of the strongest, and what appears to me to be by far the most ignoble and mischievous of all the popular feelings of the age."[201] It was virtually indecent in its "prolonged and minute discussions about relations between men and women, and the characteristics of women as such."[202] Blackwoods Magazine chided Mill for producing a work, "the tone of which is so surpassingly insolent towards the whole human race,--it involves such an insultnot only to men but to women as we love and admire them--to the ideal of woman as man's helpmate," that one might wonder at the "civility and seriousness" of its reception in the world.[203]

Many of Mill's friends were as shocked as his enemies. Frederic Harrison, lawyer and author interested in social reform, accused Mill thirty years later, in Tennyson, Ruskin, Mill, of proposing to cure women's subjection with "rank social and moral anarchy."[204] Mill's biographer, Alexander Bain, the Scottish logician and psychologist, horrified by The Subjection, charged Mill, in John Stuart Mill: A Criticism, with "overstraining." "He leads

us," said Bain, "to suppose that the relations of men and women themselves may work upon a purely voluntary principle."[205] "Kate Amberley alone was faithful" says Packe.[206] But Lady Amberley, member of the Women's Suffrage Movement, and mother of Bertrand Russell, was timid though loyal. She was pleased with The Subjection, and with the fact that it had "made a new epoch in the history of the movement," but wished that the inevitable reform "could be done without talk." She feared that women would be "turned inside out for the next 20 years," until legislators submitted to the demands for women's freedom.[207] She nevertheless became a staunch supporter, contributing time and money to promote the welfare of women. She was frequently ridiculed and socially ostracized, but she remained undaunted.

Women were discussed and turned inside out. That was a significant part of the importance of The Subjection. Packe says that "Mill had not set out either to please his friends or to enrage his enemies. He had set out to stimulate discussion, and in that he was abundantly successful. Nearly everyone had strong opinions in the matter."[208] Thirty years later Harrison was to say,

> its practical effect on legislations, manners, and opinion has no doubt been greater than anything else which Mill gave to his generation. The law has already been amended on many points which drew down his indignation and satire. A great number of the disabilities of women arising from prejudice, habit, or torpor have been practically removed. At least, there remains no legal or moral bar to the aspiring woman, except in one or two exceptional cases.... The change which the present generation has witnessed in law, practice, and in opinion is mainly due to the passionate school of reform which Mill inspired, and very largely to the

little book in which his aspirations were concentrated.[209]

The Subjection naturally occasioned its own stream of correspondence, and Mill, undaunted by the criticisms, continued writing in defence of women. His letter of July 14, 1869, to Alexander Bain, who congratulated him on his "new book," took the form of a defense for his book, but much more important it gave Mill an opportunity to state further the case for women's freedom, as presented in The Subjection.[210] His letter of August 18, 1869, to Professor John Nichol, of Glasgow University, attempts to clarify misunderstandings about his book, and to reinforce his stand on the natural capacities of women, one of his most troublesome points to many who were reluctant to accept the idea of women's mental capabilities, such as Alexander Bain, Herbert Spencer, and the popular scientist Thomas H. Huxley who shared the scientific view that women were biologically inferior to men.[211] Mill's letter of August 18, 1869, to G. Croom Robertson, philosopher, who praised The Subjection, also centers on points that needed clarification, and which gave Mill the opportunity to drive home his defense of women.[212] Mill found in Mrs. Beecher Hooker, American reformer, prominent in women's rights movement, a contemporary who understood exactly the salient points in The Subjection. Thus, in his letter of September 13, 1869, Mill gave credit to this lady for her clarity of comprehension and understanding, but had to correct her on her assumption that the greater closeness of a child to its mother implies a "natural superiority in capacity of moral excellence to women over men."[213] On 22 July 1870 Mill was obliged

to defend his position on divorce in a letter to Henry K. Rusden of Melbourne, civil servant and pamphleteer of advanced views, who accused him of purposely withholding his opinion on the subject of divorce in The Subjection, a point that has been made by other critics of the work. But as Mill clearly states, nothing that he felt important to his thesis was omitted from the text. Moreover, he had not yet formed a well-grounded opinion on the conditions for dissolubility of marriage, and did not consider himself or anyone else capable of forming an opinion on the subject under the present conditions of women. Until women were free to participate equally in any relaxation or alteration of marriage laws, no such opinions could be formed. But more specifically, the purpose of "that book was to maintain the claim of women, whether in marriage or out of it, to perfect equality in all rights with the male sex."[214]

Mill did not allow the publication of The Subjection, and its resounding success, to temper his enthusiasm and efforts for women's rights. Indeed, the passion which his treatise stirred within the nation gave him even greater cause to hope for speedy action on women's political freedom. Thus, when he received a letter from Cliffe Leslie, political economist, questioning women's fitness for politics, Mill was quick to reaffirm his opinion in his reply of October 5, 1869, that

> whatever can be justly said against women's fitness for politics either on the scope of narrowness or violence of partisanship arises chiefly if not wholly, from their exclusion from politics. Their social position allows them no scope for any feelings beyond the family except personal likings & dislikes, & it is

> assumed that they would be governed entirely by these in their judgement & feeling in political matters. But it is precisely by creating in their minds a concern for the interests which are common to all, those of their country & of human improvement, that the tendency to look upon all questions as personal questions would most effectually be corrected.[215]

Mill's continued interest to involve women in the movement for women's suffrage, and the esteem with which he was held by the working classes, are evident in his letter of October 7, 1869, to Henry Fawcett, politician and political economist. Even though Mill was now permanently resident in France, it was to him that a prominent working-man, and member of the London Women Suffrage Society, William Wood, wrote to request a suitable woman speaker for his proposed public meeting. Mill's immediate response was to select several suitable women who would be effective intellectually and personally, since he believed that personal appearance and beauty combined with intellect were the strongest tools to fight the "vulgar nonsense" spoken about "women's rights women."[216] Mill's belief in the efficacy of women's aesthetic qualities as a corrective is again expressed in a letter to Henry Fawcett, October 24, 1869, in which he thanked Mrs. Fawcett for speaking on behalf of women's suffrage. He then pursued the question of "universal and compulsory unsectarian education" on which he stood firmly in his view that it was the thing most needed to forestall the potential violence of the working classes against landowners. While Mill did not believe in private ownership of land, he was much averse to any destruction of

natural beauty, which would occur if land were handed out indiscriminately for cultivation, as the working classes desired. Women's suffrage would help, according to Mill, to avoid this problem of the likely destruction of beauty, as well as assist in many other problems of human advancement, "for women will be much more unwilling than men to submit to the expulsion of all beauty from common life."[217]

As well as his concern for the potential mass violence of the working classes, Mill also continued his interest in violence in the home, and the judicial decisions made about it. So, on January 11, 1870, he sent a letter of protest to Sir Robert Collier, Attorney-General, stating his indignation at the treatment of a policeman who tried to protect a woman from her husband's brutality. Mill was furious because as the evidence states, the policeman saw a man knock down a woman, and intervened by striking the man with his staff. The policeman was charged with "unprovoked, brutal, and injustifiable" assault, and was imprisoned for one month with hard labour, then dismissed dishonorably from the force.[218] As Mill explains, he is not an admirer of the police, because they are generally very corrupt, but that a policeman protecting a woman from violence should be treated in such a manner is certainly beyond belief. Mill contends that even if the policeman was guilty of a little excessive zeal, such a judicial decision is an obvious encouragement for unchecked violence against women. For,

> policemen will think twice before they will interfere again to protect men's wives, or any other woman, against brutality when they find that any hurt they inflict on a brute of this description is declared

> from the seat of justice to be not only "brutal and injustifiable," but "unprovoked," knocking down a woman in the street being no provocation to a by-stander, even to an appointed and paid preserver of the peace -- that, in short, a woman is a creature whom it is safe to knock down, but most dangerous to defend from being knocked down by another man.[219]

Mill addressed himself next to the social evil of prostitution which to him corrupted men and degraded women. He stated his views in a letter to Lord Amberley, February 2, 1870, in response to Mr. W.E.H. Lecky, historian and essayist, who approved of prostitution as an essential social evil which prevented worse evils. Mill blames men, and the "Catholic Church" for their excessive emphasis on the natural passions, of which prostitution is a consequence. He believes that when men learn to control sexual passion with the aid of reason, as a large number of women have done, then the problem of prostitution will be lessened. He regards any sexual union without love as gross indulgence of the animal passions which in the case of prostitution "sacrifices" the woman's "whole existence," and is the greatest corrupter of men. It also interferes with the progress of marriage which has not yet had a fair chance in the form it would take between equals. Mill states further that the advocates of prostitution, who object to reform, are men whose chief aim is to give the greatest amount of license to men, while "retaining a sufficient reserve or nursery of chaste women for wives."[220]

Mill's attitude towards prostitution makes it almost inevitable that sooner or later he would question the effects of the "Contagious Disease Acts" upon women. This he did on January 18, 1870, when he

wrote to William Malleson, secretary of his election campaign, stating that the Act is a "monstrous artificial cure for a monstrous artificial evil," and that it is designed to emphasize even further, the "gross inequality between men and women."[221] But this opinion was not Mill's last word on the subject. The "Contagious Disease Acts" became once more the object of Mill's rage against laws that protected men and abused women. On December 29, 1870, Mill wrote to Professor J. Nichol, of Glasgow, declining an invitation to address a suffrage meeting, but availing himself of the opportunity to discuss the Contagious Disease Act which was also of concern to Nichol. Mill decried the fact that this law was made by men, to apply only to women, and that most of the advocates of this law were the very persons who refused to give women a voice in the affairs of the country. Even worse, he objected to the forced medical inspection and forcible detention which women were being subjected to, when their consorts were exempted from these measures. Mill states that not only is the whole process of forceful examination of women mentally and physically painful as well as "dangerous," but the subjecting of women to such "insulting indignity at the pleasure of the police has the genuine characteristics of tyranny."[222] Mill's agitation sufficiently excited a group of women led by Mrs. Josephine Butler, prominent feminist, who raised such a general uproar about the injustice and ineffectiveness of the law that a Royal Commission was appointed to investigate their concerns.[223] Mill was to have his day, moreover, for he was called as a witness with "knowledgeable if peculiar views on women."[224] In his testimony, Mill shocked the

Commission by blaming men as the chief cause of the spread of venereal disease:

> The object of the Act is not to protect those who voluntarily seek indulgence, but to protect the innocent from having these diseases communicated to them; that I understand to be the object. Now a woman cannot communicate the disease but to a person who seeks it, and who knowingly places himself in the way of it. A woman can only communicate through a man; it must be the man who communicates it to innocent women and children afterwards. It seems to me, therefore, if the object is to protect those who are not unchaste, the way to do this is to bring motives to bear on the man and not on the woman, who cannot have anything to do directly with the communication of it to persons entirely innocent, whereas the man can and does."[225]

This was a preposterous point of view to those who held the freedom and rights of men to be sacred. But Mill was undaunted and stuck to his views. Notes Packe, "fifteen years afterwards, the Contagious Disease Acts were replaced."[226]

The question of women's suffrage as the ultimate passport to women's freedom was never far from Mill's mind. In a letter of May 28, 1870, to Sir Charles Dilke, Radical MP, Mill was emphatic in his refusal to link women's suffrage with universal suffrage, because he felt that the whole question of women's equality would be lost to the working men's fight for the franchise, and women would be forgotten in the final decision. Their chance for freedom would be set back for generations and would perhaps never again achieve the momentum it had to date.[227] On January 20, 1871, Mill restates his claim, in a letter to J.H.K. Wilcox, American insurance broker and politician, that "one of the endless benefits that will flow from

that greatest and most fundamental of all improvements in human society," will be women's suffrage.[228] A letter to Joseph Giles of New Zealand, physician, editor, later magistrate and farmer, August 24, 1871, expressed joy that Giles too was of the opinion that "the most vitally important political and social question of the future," is that of "the equality between men and women."[229] Women's equality was again raised as the burning issue of the day in a letter 21 September 1871 to C.L. Brace, philantropist; founder of Children's Aid Society in New York. In it Mill states his opinion that the condition of women was even more basic an issue than proportional representation, and that the two should continue to be dealt with separately for that was the only way to complete social and political equality for women. Mill also reasserts his belief that women will be the peacemakers of society after they have gained their freedom and have had the chance for self-development.[230] The support of other groups for women's rights was always a pleasure to Mill, and in his letter of January 29, 1872, he told the Hon. Auberon Herbert, political philosopher and author, he was very pleased that the working men had begun "to claim on principle for women all the rights which they demanded for themselves."[231]

The desire for balance in all things was a dominant characteristic of Mill who spent a lifetime searching for the ideal formula for equity in society. It is significant, therefore, that even towards the end of his life he should continue to address himself to the pressing issue of marital relations. Throughout the years, Mill retained his strong convictions about the qualities that were necessary

to create the perfect marital relationship. He was consequently not about to encourage hasty separation and divorce for persons who wanted to leave their partners on grounds of incompatibility. On 1 May 1870, Mill was obliged to inform an unidentified lady who wrote for marital guidance, that differences in thought and feeling were not sound enough grounds for divorce, because when all other aspects of the relationship are in balance, tolerance and time often bring these differences to "approximation."[232]

Mill's last available letter on the subject was written on November 5, 1872, and is said to be "chiefly by Helen Taylor." In this letter to G. Croom Robertson, Mill reaffirms one of his major premises that beauty combined with intellect are important tools for gaining women their rights. But he clarifies his meaning by suggesting that it was not for men that women should make themselves beautiful, but for the younger women as an example,

> to show them that the championship of women's cause is not confined to women who have no qualifications for success in the beaten track (marriage) and that they would not by joining the movement forfeit their chance of the ordinary objects of women's ambition.[233]

Mill adds that "this is an advantage which outweighs even some inferiority in lecturing powers."[234]

John Stuart Mill believed that liberated women would improve all stations in society. He worked untiringly to assist women in the achievement of this goal; and as Packe so aptly states, "no one was more aware than Mill of the extent of women's disability. He saw it as a hydra with a hundred heads."[235] The problem was, however, that

"he knew his time was short, and if he was to achieve anything, it could only be by piercing the monster through the heart."[236] He tried and in many ways succeeded. His generosity was boundless; and "he gave money freely" and constantly as subscriptions or donations. The "Women's Suffrage Society was, of course, the principal recipient." Mill "even seems, on occasion to have emptied his pockets out in the street...."[237] His final grand gesture was to leave "£6000, nearly half of his total estate, to the cause of women," "£3000 to endow scholarships for female students only."[238] But Mill left us also another legacy equal in importance to all the others. He left The Subjection of Women.

CHAPTER THREE

A DESCRIPTIVE CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SUBJECTION OF WOMEN

The Subjection of Women, John Stuart Mill's definitive and most controversial work on the social, political, and economic status of women, exploded over England like a massive bomb, its repercussions felt far beyond the shores of the British Isles. Mill's campaign for women's rights had gained momentum, and was rapidly advancing all over the country. His periodical writings, his private correspondences, and his major publications, such as On Liberty, Dissertations and Discussions, Representative Government, and Utilitarianism, had all contributed to the growth in awareness of women's subject condition. His parliamentary plea for women's admission to the franchise had swelled the issue to immeasurable proportions, and now, as part of his continued strategy, the time had come for the next blast against this malignancy, which he had vowed to eradicate. So, in April 1869, Mill published The Subjection of Women, which he had written in 1861 and kept for that decisive moment when its impact

would shatter the calm and complacency of every aware citizen in the country.

In this work, which encompasses all that he had ever thought and written previously on the subject, and which stands foremost among all other contemporary works of its kind in his time, Mill methodically and thoughtfully exposed many evils that had beset women, throughout history, in education, in the marketplace, and in the home. He demolished the common conjectures about women's nature, recognizing them as mere dogma devoid of the only possible means of gaining even a partial insight into the subject, that is, "an analytic study of the most important department of psychology, the laws of the influence of circumstances on character."[1] Mill delineated women's social condition, from the most savage to the thoroughly debased, and he spared no one. He dared to attack marriage, that bastion of family life, revealing all its attendant disadvantages for women and men alike. He confronted even the seemingly ideal marriages, exposing the underlying imperfections inherent in any relationship based on authority on one side and submission on the other, noting that,

> the most favourable case which a man can generally have for studying the character of a woman, is that of his own wife: for the opportunities are greater, and the cases of complete sympathy not so unspeakably rare. And in fact, this is the source from which any knowledge worth having on the subject has, I believe, generally come. But most men have not had the opportunity of studying in this way more than one single case: accordingly one can, to an almost laughable degree, infer what a man's wife is like, from his opinions about women in general. To make even this one case yield any result, the woman must be worth knowing, and

> the man not only a competent judge, but of a character so sympathetic in itself and so well adapted to hers, that he can either read her mind by sympathetic intuition, or has nothing in himself which makes her shy of disclosing it. Hardly anything, I believe, can be more rare than this conjunction. It often happens that there is the most complete unity of feeling and community interest as to all external things, yet the one has as little admission into the internal life of the other as if they were common acquaintance. Even with true affection, authority on the one side and subordination on the other prevent perfect confidence. Though nothing may be intentionally withheld, much is not shown.[2]

Though Mill sought to expose the fallacies and pretensions that had hindered the progress of women, he was no careless iconoclast seeking to destroy for the mere sake of destroying. In fact, Mill did not seek to destroy the existing social conventions which kept women in chains, what he wanted were changes that would release women from their bondage: their freedom being also the freedom of society as a whole. His goal was to sharpen awareness, and stimulate discussion, in hopes of gaining for women complete political, economic and social equality. Mill did not presume to expound what women's nature would enable them to accomplish, for he was already painfully aware that women's subjection resulted from the custom of making assumptions about their nature. He wanted women to have the freedom to choose, to become whatever they desired to be. This freedom when combined with opportunity would solve the problem of women's disabilities, because they would respond to their various social needs according to their natural inclinations. Thus Mill begins <u>The Subjection</u>

with his lifelong premise

> that the principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes--the legal subordination of one sex to the other--is wrong in itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement; and that it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality, admitting no power or privilege on the one side, nor disability on the other.[3]

Mill was perfectly aware of the difficulties surrounding the task he had undertaken. He was attacking a custom that was deeply rooted in public opinion, and one in which nearly all of society, including most of the victims, acquiesced. Even more arduous was the task of attacking opinions "strongly rooted in feelings." For as Mill shows, opinion not based on argument cannot be refuted by argument,

> for if it were accepted as a result of argument, the refutation of the argument might shake the solidity of the conviction; but when it rests solely on feeling, the worse it fares in argumentative contest, the more persuaded its adherents are that their feeling must have deeper ground, which the arguments do not reach; and while the feeling remains, it is always throwing up fresh intrenchments of argument to repair any breach made in the old.[4]

With the seemingly impossible task of refuting emotionally based arguments, Mill had to choose the most effective method of approach. He decided, therefore, to adopt the legal method, and present his case as before a court of law, acknowledging, at the same time, that

> in every respect the burthen is hard on those who

> attack an almost universal opinion. They must be very fortunate as well as unusually capable if they obtain a hearing at all. They have more difficulty in obtaining a trial, than any other litigants have in getting a verdict.[5]

Mill evidently considered himself one of those fortunate and unusually capable persons, for he not only got a hearing but he succeeded in winning his case, though he did not live long enough to hear the final verdict.

Having assumed the status of the misunderstood victim, who as defender of women's cause must also defend himself, Mill proceeded to set up his defense. He chose, however, to take on both the affirmative and the negative positions, in order to prove that universal custom and popular sentiments were the sources of women's subjection. This clever but unlikely strategy in a legitimate legal battle gained Mill the entire field, and left him free to present argument and counter argument, having already decided that the "understandings of the majority of mankind would need to be much better cultivated than has ever yet been the case, before they can be asked to place such reliance in their own power of estimating arguments,..."[6] Notwithstanding the enormous weight of the task, and the ignorance he must contend with, Mill proceeds to show under what conditions the present subservient state of women might have been valid: If "other modes of social organization" had been tried where men and women both had the opportunity to rule jointly, or over each other, and if after these trials the present state of men's complete rule over women turned out to be the best for both,

> its general adoption might then be fairly thought to be some evidence that, at the time when it was adopted, it was the best: though even then the considerations which recommended it may, like so many other primeval social facts of the greatest importance, have consequently, in the course of ages, ceased to exist. But the state of the case is in every respect the reverse of this.[7]

Mill chooses for his first piece of evidence the issue of worn out customs and practices. He contends that while the subject conditions in which women exist perhaps began for what seemed like logical reasons, in primitive times, the advance of civilization has brought many changes to which men have become readily adapted. Yet, they persist in maintaining their superior status over women without desiring to test alternative forms of relations between the sexes. According to Mill, a relation that began merely as that of the strong against the weak, and on the value that men then placed on women, has become law based on custom and tradition:

> They convert what was a mere physical fact into a legal right, and give it the sanction of society, and principally aim at substitution of public and organized means of asserting and protecting these rights, instead of the irregular and lawless conflict of physical strength. Those who had already been compelled to obedience became in this manner legally bound to it.[8]

Mill shows further that although the slavery of men has been abolished in all Christian European countries, the slavery of women "has been gradually changed into a milder form of dependence," and that

> this dependence, as it exists at present, is not an original institution, taking a fresh start from considerations of justice and social expediency-- it is

> the primitive state of slavery lasting on, through successive mitigations and modifications occasioned by the same causes which have softened the general manners, and brought all human relations more under the control of justice and the influence of humanity. It has not lost the taint of its brutal origin. No presumption in its favour, therefore, can be drawn from the fact of its existence.[9]

With the use of an ordered sequence of arguments, and examples of changes in man's evolution through history, Mill demonstrates that civilized modern man is still weighed down by primitive notions sanctified by custom and unexamined assumptions about what is natural. He makes the comparison between the humiliated masses ruled by absolute power, and women ruled by men. Mill is conscious that his view of society might be rejected by men who are too ready to accept the status quo as natural. He nevertheless goes on to show that even the most arbitrary acquisition of power has always been regarded as natural by those who acquire it. There are many ways of exerting power, and extreme as his opinion might seem to his opponents, Mill rightly asserts that women are in a "chronic state of bribery and intimidation," a situation analogous to that of the champions in the "struggles for political emancipation" who are "bought off by bribes, or daunted by terror."[10]

Mill shows further, that even the most cultivated minds have advocated slavery as a natural condition.

> No less an intellect, and one which contributed no less to the progress of human thought, than Aristotle, held this opinion without doubt or misgiving, and rested it on the same premises on which the same assertion in regard to the dominion of men over women is usually

> based, namely that there are different natures among mankind, free natures, and slave natures; that the Greeks were of a free nature, the barbarian races of Thracians and Asiatics of slave nature.[11]

There is no need to go so far back in history when we have the prime example of this practice in modern times. Thus Mill cites the conditions of slavery in the Southern United States and the passion and fanaticism of that society's belief in the natural right of one race to dominate another, thereby making legitimate a depraved practice founded solely on self-interest. Tyrants and oppressors of every kind have always deemed it natural that others should be subordinated to them. But Mill does not regard such inertia and complacency as a legitimate state of affairs.

What is even more distasteful to Mill is the sentimental plot which men devise for women, to keep them in subjection. He argues that

> men do not want solely the obedience of women, they want their sentiments. All men, except the most brutish, desire to have, in the woman most nearly connected with them, not a forced slave but a willing one, not a slave merely, but a favourite. They have therefore put everything into practice to enslave their minds.[12]

Mill blames this mental enslavement of women on the moral and sentimental education which men invent to keep women narrowly bound within the limits set for them. He asserts further that "women are brought up from their earliest years" to believe that they are by nature different from men, and that their natural character is that of sub-

mission, and of being in the control of others. This submissiveness, of course, puts women in the position of having no higher aspirations or goals than to be attractive to men. So, their chief occupation becomes coquetry which satisfies those men whose superiority depends on the base practice of controlling the will of others. Mill defines this condition clearly in his statement that,

> when we put together three things--first, the natural attraction between opposite sexes; secondly, the wife's entire dependence on the husband, every privilege or pleasure she has being either his gift, or depending entirely on his will; and lastly, that the principal object of human pursuit, consideration, and all objects of social ambition, can in general be sought or obtained by her only through him, it would be a miracle if the object of being attractive to men had not become the polar star of feminine education and formation of character.[13]

It is Mill's view then that women weaken their characters by their habitual dissimulation and subservience, and that the only remedy for this malady is the freedom to choose their own destinies. Without this freedom of choice both the individual and society suffer, because lack of freedom deprives the individual of the opportunity for personal development, and deprives society of some chances of competition and free selection of ability. Thus society loses. Mill argues that no adult male citizen is legally excluded from competing for any position, yet women by virtue of their birth are subjected to disabilities which "are the solitary examples of the kind in modern legislation."[14] His acute awareness of the condition of women is heightened as he echoes his plea of two years before in Parliament,

for admission of women to the franchise:

> In no instance except this, which comprehends half the human race, are the higher social functions closed against any one by a fatality of birth which no exertions, and no change of circumstances, can overcome; for even religious disabilities (besides that in England and in Europe they have practically almost ceased to exist) do not close any career to the disqualified person in case of conversion.[15]

Mill continues his stark representation by introducing a hypothetical situation, in which Paganism as the norm is juxtaposed with Christianity as the deviation, to demonstrate the anachronism of existing relationships between men and women:

> The social subordination of women thus stands out an isolated fact in modern social institutions; a solitary breach of what has become their fundamental law; a single relic of an old world of thought and practice exploded in everything else, but retained in the one thing of most universal interest; as if a gigantic dolmen, or a vast temple of Jupiter Olympius, occupied the site of St. Paul's and received daily worship, while the surrounding Christian churches were only resorted to on fasts and festivals. This entire discrepancy between one social fact and all those which accompany it, and the radical opposition between its nature and the progressive movement which is the boast of the modern world, and which has successively swept away everything else of an analogous character, surely affords, to a conscientious observer of human tendencies, serious matter for reflection.[16]

Mill was indeed a conscientious observer of human tendencies who not only reflected seriously on the matter of the subjection of women but developed a clear and precise view of both the causes of the ailment, and the cure. Thus, as an astute defender, Mill demands that the issue be "open to discussion on its merits, as a question of

justice and expediency," rather than continue as it exists, as a matter of custom and assumptions.[17] A shrewd move indeed, for as long as the question remains closed, and women are denied opportunities for examining and evaluating their existing condition, men will continue to resort to history for proof of the legitimacy of women's natural submissiveness. In Mill's view, all that can be said of the experience gained in the existing historical condition

> is that mankind have been able to exist under it, and to attain the degree of improvement and prosperity which we now see; but whether that prosperity has been attained sooner, or is now greater, than it would have been under the other system, experience does not say.[18]

Mill asserts that the progressive period of history does show marked improvement in the social condition of women, and that women have been moving closer to equality with men. "This does not of itself prove that the assimilation must go on to complete equality; but it assuredly affords some presumption that such is the case."[19]

Mill concerns himself not only with the physical progress of women, but also with the need for psychological changes in the way society perceives women and their capabilities, and how women perceive themselves. He rejects any assumptions about inherent character, a very popular assumption in his time, for, in his opinion, mankind is still ignorant about the influences which determine human character. Moreover, Mill touches the very heart of the matter, when he suggests that not much can be known about the subject until the study of

psychology reaches a much more advanced state, and even then it will require much progress in women's development before anyone can make valid assumptions about the possibilities of their character. Furthermore, Mill asserts that only women are fit to speak about anything to do with their nature, for even where close relationships exist between a man and a woman, the existing inequality prevents complete openness and honesty. Therefore, as Mill determines this situation,

> what is now called the nature of women is an eminently artificial thing -- the result of forced repression in some directions, unnatural stimulation in others.[20]

He adds that,

> it may be asserted without scruple, that no other class of dependents have had their character so entirely distorted from its natural proportions by their relation with their masters; for, if conquered and slave races have been, in some respects, more forcibly repressed, whatever in them has not been crushed down by an iron heel has generally been let alone, and if left with any liberty of development, it has developed itself according to its own laws; but in the case of women, a hot-house and stove cultivation has always been carried on of some of the capabilities of their nature, for the benefit and pleasure of their masters.[21]

Mill expands his bold analogy of the greenhouse-arctic effect to show that natural causes cannot be presumed without considering artificial ones also. A tree which has one half of its shoots watered and well nurtured in a heated condition will "sprout luxuriantly and reach a great development" on this nourished side. If at the same time the other side is exposed to wintry conditions or has ice "purposely

heaped" upon it, the growth of the shoots on this side will be stunted, and some shoots will even be "burnt off with fire and disappear." This, then, is his blunt representation of the condition in which men have kept women, especially, as he says, those indolent men who are incapable of analysis and are thereby unable "to recognize their own work."[22]

This issue of women's nature was an extremely difficult one for Mill to tackle, especially in light of all the opposition to his "peculiar" views about women. But on the question of women's nature Mill stands firm with his "logical objection that nothing can be known of the inherent nature of a personality so subject--as to be virtually created by--circumstantial conditioning.[23] For unlike Ruskin, and other contemporaries who regard men and women as separate but complementary in natures, and who believe that a woman's place is in the home, Mill rejects such narrow limits for women. He believes that free competition will decide what is to be the proper division of labour in the marketplace; for one thing is certain, "what is contrary to women's nature to do, they never will be made to do by simply giving their nature free play."[24] This is indeed keen insight into the problem of women's position, and as Mill observes further,

> the anxiety of mankind to interfere in behalf of nature, for fear lest nature should not succeed in effecting its purpose, is an altogether unnecessary solicitude. What women by nature cannot do, it is quite superfluous to forbid them from doing. What they can do but not so well as men who are their competitors, competition suffices to exclude them from; since nobody asks for protective duties and bounties in favour of women; it is only asked that the present bounties and protective duties in favour of men should be recalled.[25]

Moreover,

> if women have a greater natural inclination for some things than for others, there is no need of laws or social inculcation to make the majority of them do the former in preference to the latter. Whatever women's services are most wanted for, the free play of competition will hold out the strongest inducements to them to undertake.[26]

Even though the opposition might regard Mill's extremely liberal and progressive views on freedom for women as a form of enthusiasm that reaches far beyond the norms of society, his deductions are basically sound and lend much credibility to his argument. As he puts it, there is much contradiction in man's insistence that a woman's natural vocation is that of a wife and mother. If this is so, then why is it so necessary to force her to fulfil this function? Mill rightly observes that it is as if the thing alleged to be the most "natural vocation of women was of all things the most repugnant to their nature." It follows, then, as Mill so astutely defines the problem, that men's overt pressure to keep women subject overshadows their underlying fear that if women are free to choose any "other means of living, or occupation" more desirable to them, "there will not be enough of them who will be willing to accept the condition said to be natural to them."[27] But the point is that without the freedom to choose both men and women are in a form of bondage, men in the bondage of fear, and women as the slaves of men.

In concluding this general discussion of women's status in society, as it has evolved through custom and education, Mill draws a

parallel with two systems of forced labour that exist in modern society (slavery and impressment), to show the true condition of women. If women, like impressed sailors, are given only "Hobson's choice," this implies that "the boon one offers" is not "very attractive." Mill believes that in this "that or none" situation lies "the clue to the feelings of those men, who have a real antipathy to equal freedom of women."[28] Men are afraid that women, if given freedom of choice, will insist on equality in marriage, or choose to do "almost anything else . . . rather than marry, when marrying is giving themselves a master, and a master too of all their earthly possessions."[29] Thus Mill concludes this part of his discussion with candour that strikes at the root of the whole problem of women's subjection:

> If men are determined that the law of marriage shall be a law of despotism, they are quite right, in point of mere policy, in leaving to women only Hobson's choice. But, in that case, all that has been done in the modern world to relax the chain on the minds of women, has been a mistake. They never should have been allowed to receive a literary education. Women who read, much more women who write, are, in the existing constitution of things, a contradiction and a disturbing element: and it was wrong to bring women up with any requirements but those of an odalisque, or of a domestic servant.[30]

From this general picture of the social enslavement of women, Mill takes up the specific issues of the legal position of women in marriage, women's occupations, and the benefits to be derived by society from the proposed changes in women's political, social and economic condition. Here Mill discusses in great detail the pros and cons of women's

existing status, and the measures desired for its relief. An important aspect of this portion of the work is the obvious impartiality with which he deals with the deficiencies of both men and women in society. It is true that he occasionally apologises for having to make extremely harsh and derogatory statements about women's "mischievous" involvements with their families, and with society on occasions. It is also true that although he severely criticizes women at times, he holds men responsible for making women into what they have become: submissive, uneducated, narrow, and meddlesome. One of Mill's points is to show that by keeping women subject, men have become victims of their own evil deeds, because marriage to an uneducated shrewish wife can only result in the deterioration of the intellect of an intelligent man.

Another marked feature of this section of The Subjection is Mill's continued optimism about the progress of mankind, and for the eventual achievement of equality between the sexes. Although somewhat idealistic in his dreams of a future egalitarian relations between men and women, Mill's hopes rest on the changes that are taking place in the lives of many women. Martha Vicinus in A Widening Sphere speaks of the relationship between Mill's vision of the future potential of women and the existing trend at that time:

> In 1869 John Stuart Mill described in The Subjection of Women THe [sic] rigid slavelike stereotype of the nineteenth-century wife and mother. But he also spoke of the enormous potential of women, which he saw being realized in the period when he wrote. His sense of their widening sphere of moral and social activities was not wholly a product of his own idealism.

> By the 1860's the woman question had become one of the most important topics of the day. Job opportunities, marriage laws, female emigration, and education were only some of the issues debated at the time. Women themselves--and particularly middle-class women--were increasingly concerned with what their roles were, and what they should be.[31]

Mill was both anxious and determined to see that all spheres of women's disabilities receive due attention. Marriage law was one of the many handicaps that he wanted to bring to the forefront of public discussion. So, with a sense of urgency, Mill launches his attack on the existing marriage laws which force women to remain in the most depraved conditions without any hope of relief. Mill points to the fact that men have such dominion over women that even though there are changes of various kinds taking place, conditions are not far removed from those not long ago, when "the husband was called the lord of the wife," and she could be tried for petty treason and be burnt at the stake, should she murder him, and when there was no protection for the wife from the severest maltreatment by a husband.[32] Mill contends that because these "enormities have fallen into disuse," men have assumed that the marriage contract is all it should be.[33] His ire is directed particularly at the indignity which women suffer in the marriage vows. For a woman in marriage "vows a lifelong obedience" to her husband "at the altar, and is held to it all through her life by law."[34] Mill regards this rank injustice as even baser when it is considered that a woman in marriage gives up ownership of herself, of her property and all earthly possessions, and that

even on the death of her husband, if he so desires, her children will never belong to her. Mill's aim therefore is to sway public opinion, in defense of women, against these and other appalling legal conditions which are designed to enslave them.

But as Mill points out he is describing the "wife's legal position not her actual treatment," for it would be an exaggeration to suggest that all women suffer the full force of the laws as they apply to them.[35] His concern therefore is not whether such laws are enforced; and they are, according to Mill, among the lower classes in particular. The question is whether these laws should exist at all. This is the crux of Mill's contention. Any law which gives one person absolute power of control over another, to deprive him of all rights and freedom, is in fact subjecting him to despotism of the worst kind. This is the state of all married women in a society which does not sanction divorce, and especially divorce by women. To Mill this is a despicable state of affairs. He recommends divorce on the grounds of violence because he believes that domestic tyranny is far more prevalent than is commonly acknowledged. He gives his intellectual elitism full play as he rails against petty men who have no significance except in their homes where they exercise legal power over their wives and children. One cannot really blame Mill for his high indignation and his sense of moral superiority, for as he says

> when we consider how vast is the number of men, in any great country, who are little higher than brutes, and that this never prevents them from being able, through the law of marriage, to obtain a victim, the breadth

> and depth of human misery caused in this shape alone by the abuse of the institution swells to something appalling.[36]

In contrast to these brutal conditions which to Mill are the result of feelings of inferiority, and the practice of animalism and selfishness, he sets an ideal for the family which "in its best forms is, as it is often said to be, a school of sympathy, tenderness, and loving forgetfulness of self."[37] As Mill sees the situation, this ideal is the exception because the family

> is still oftener, as respects its chief, a school of wilfulness, overbearingness, unbounded self-indulgence, and a double-dyed and idealized selfishness, of which sacrifice itself is only a particular form: the care of the wife and children being only care for them as parts of the man's own interests and belongings, and their individual happiness being immolated in every shape to his smallest preferences.[38]

Mill believes that the wife does not sit still always and endure the fiery selfishness of a tyrannical husband. She has the power of retaliation and uses it often to make the husband's life most uncomfortable. But unfortunately, women too use power wrongly; and as Mill assesses this family situation, it is often the "irritable and self-willed women" who use nagging as a weapon, often against the least "tyrannical superiors." The very fact that the wife is made an inferior, whether to a mild or tyrannical husband, leads to a struggle for power, because if she has any sense of her worth she will struggle to achieve the equality which Mill advocates so strongly. There is, however, no excuse for tyranny in any form or

for any reason, the object of any victim of tyranny is to find freedom, and as Mill states "neither in the affairs of families nor in those of states is power a compensation for the loss of freedom."[39] And in the case of the subject wife who uses her power against her untyrannical husband, "her power often gives her what she has no rights to, but does not enable her to assert her own rights."[40] Mill reflects, however, that many kindly husbands are destroyed intellectually by wives whose lack of education limits them to knowledge of personal and family matters only. These wives often influence their husbands on social and personal affairs by maintaining social contacts primarily with their own close acquaintances. Soon the husbands become less interested in public concerns and suffer deterioration of their intellect.

This is indeed a sad indictment of human affairs, wives brutalized by ruffian husbands and gentle husbands destroyed by shrewish or scheming wives. The case is not hopeless however, for Mill with his usual optimism proposes a remedy for these ills. There must be cultivation of affection for any relation to succeed. The reliance on physical attraction as the primary source of the relation is a weak link in the chain that binds two persons together, because where the wife uses "feminine blandishments" to influence her husband, her power will only last "while the woman is young and attractive, often only while her charm is new, and not dimmed by familiarity."[41] Of course Mill adds that "on many men they have not much influence at any time." These I presume are those men of higher natures and intellect, such as Mill himself, who, though

attracted to beautiful women, tended to respond more to the intellectual than to the physical stimuli they received from these women.

This tendency of Mill to minimize the importance of physical relations, or what he commonly calls animal indulgence, has made him a frequent target for personal abuse on the matter of his sexuality. It is perfectly logical, however, that a relation that is founded on mutual affection, and grows on volunary association and division of labour based on individual capacities and suitabilities, is bound to be more successful than one based purely on physical attraction. Mill not only suggests this view as a part of the formula for building better relationships, but he also suggests that the division of rights would follow naturally from "division of duties and functions."[42] He believes that "the influence of mental superiority, either general or special, and of superior decision of character, will necessarily tell for much."[43] The crux of the matter is, then, that two persons must be willing to make compromises and to continue to strive for balance in their relationship, aiming always for perfect equality where neither is absolute ruler or absolute inferior, but each contributing according to natural inclinations while ever mindful of the other's needs.

An excellent prescription; but Mill is too conscious of the hindrances in the way of such an achievement to take things for granted and rest his case. He points, therefore, to the contradiction evident in modern society's view of women in relation to men. He says,

> we are perpetually told that women are better than men, by those who are totally opposed to treating them as if they were as good; so that the saying has passed into a piece of tiresome cant, intended to put a complimentary face upon an injury, and resembling those celebrations of royal clemency which, according to Gulliver, the king of Lilliput always prefixed to his sanguinary decrees.[44]

There can be no voluntary association much less equality in the face of such glaring contradictions. Mill reasserts therefore that equality of rights is, in his belief, the thing needful to "abate the exaggerated self-abnegation which is the present artificial ideal of feminine character."[45] He accuses men of over-indulgence and self-worship which affect their relationship with women, and which get worse the lower down the scale of humanity we descend. Mill severely criticizes philosophy and religion which, instead of curbing men's extreme self-indulgence,

> are generally suborned to defend it; and nothing controls it but that practical feeling of the equality of human beings, which is the theory of Christianity, but which Christianity will never practically teach, while it sanctions institutions grounded on an arbitrary preference of one human being over another.[46]

Where there is no chance of equal consideration with persons whose opinions and will must always have full sway, divorce is the most applicable solution, for such persons are unfit to associate with others, "and no human beings ought to be compelled to associate their lives with them."[47] The pity of this situation is that where a woman finds herself in union with a man of this disposition, without legal rights, she is forced to "contrive" in order to survive,

a necessary but despicable state in Mill's opinion.

Mill re-emphasizes his belief in the possibility of human progress by stating that "the only school of genuine moral sentiment is society between equals."[48] He reasserts his infinite faith in the future of mankind, and refuses to leave his ideal prescription without some qualification. He is indeed a realist who dreams a little but sticks closely to the facts. Mill is forced to accept that the hierarchical structure of society has determined the existing moralities which are based on subservient relationships, especially the subservience of women to men. This being the case, it is hardly conceivable that the dream of equality will ever be achieved. Mill believes, however, that the emerging moral state of society is equality and he optimistically declares that,

> already in modern life, and more and more as it progressively improves, command and obedience become exceptional facts in life, equal association its general rule.[49]

Farfetched as this statement might seem when viewed in light of the existing state of human relationships, it is nevertheless a characteristic Victorian notion, seeing England as the world. As Mill himself says, there is no longer any obligation to submit to power (except in man woman relations); the weak no longer has to be protected by the strong (again except in relations between the sexes). His plea therefore is for "morality and justice," for which the time is right. He predicts that

> we are entering into an order of things in which justice will again be the primary virtue; grounded

> as before on equal, but now also on sympathetic association; having its root no longer in the instinct of equals for self-protection, but in a cultivated sympathy between them; and no one now being left out, but an equal measure being extended to all.[50]

Mill's intellectual elitism is again at work as he speaks of man's inability to presage the future. He declares that only that special breed of "intellectual elite," or martyrs, a "still rarer elite," have ever been able to see or feel the future."[51] Mill believes that the blindness in modern society results from the fact that "institutions, books, education, society, all go on training human beings for the old, long after the new has come; much more when it is only coming."[52] Of course, Mill is not against history. He uses it to reveal the present and to expose modern man's ignorance of his past. What he wants is greater awareness of the present and the future. The hope for the future, then, lies in the family which Mill sees now as a "school of despotism," but which he calls on to become the foundation of freedom. Of course, this will only be achieved with equality of rights. Thus he demands the right of women to have property, and in an even more advanced move advocates a community of goods which to him is an essential part of the doctrine of equality; but it is also the doctrine for which the Saint-Simonians were maligned.

This demand for property rights and community of goods leads directly to Mill's next point, division of labour, which has incensed many of his opponents who see him as relegating women back to the home even after advocating their right to freedom and independence. Patricia Hughes, of Osgoode Hall, in her article "The Reality Versus

the ideal: J.S. Mill's Treatment of Women, Workers, and Private Property," accuses Mill of this very act. She states that Mill's "advocacy of the back-to-the-home movement . . . changes the impact of his view that women should have the right to enter any occupation they choose."[53] This is indeed a misinterpretation of Mill, as George Feaver, of the University of British Columbia so rightly points out in his article "Comment: Overcoming His-story? Ms. Hughes's Treatment of Mr. Mill." Far from relegating women to the home, Mill is showing much sensitivity for the plight of women who work both at home and in a public occupation.[54] For he suggests that where there is no financial need it might be best for women to receive their education before marriage, then stay home and raise their children until the family's needs can be met without their full attention. He advocates that then women should seek occupations outside the home to prevent uselessness and intellectual atrophy. In fact he even suggests that the woman who is raising her children should find some occupation which she can carry out at home and preferably out-of-doors. But most of all Mill states categorically that,

> the utmost latitude ought to exist for the adaptation of general rules to individual suitabilities; and there ought to be nothing to prevent faculties exceptionally adapted to any other pursuit, from obeying their vocation notwithstanding marriage: due provision being made for supplying otherwise any falling-short which might become inevitable in her full performance of the ordinary functions of mistress of a family.[55]

On the issue of occupation in The Subjection, Mill launches an attack on the desire of men to keep women in domestic subjection,

because they are incapable of living with equals. This claim is indeed quite true, and the problem has continued into the future which Mill hoped would bring the new equality. His contention is that not only is society robbed of one half of its personnel for lucrative occupations and high social functions but women personally suffer from the distinction of having no identity except that of their masters. Mill believes that men have used previously the excuse that keeping women out of public occupations and offices was in the public interest; but as he so rightly states, by public interest was meant man's interest. Now men use the excuse of women's supposed biological inferiority to prevent their participation in public life. Mill shows great indignation at the fact that women are considered from birth as not eligible or fit to participate in the work force, even such jobs as

> are legally open to the stupidest and basest of the other sex, or else that however fit they may be, those employments shall be interdicted to them, in order to be preserved for the exclusive benefit of males.[56]

Mill's chief concern here is the blatant injustice inherent in the total exclusion of half the human race from its rightful place in society.

In a series of rhetorical questions, Mill arrives at the conclusion that the exclusion of women from voting in "both parliamentary and municipal" elections is an infringement of a right which cannot be based on the customary assumptions about their faculties. The fact remains that the exclusions deny the right of deciding by whom

one shall be governed, a completely different matter from desiring to be one of the governors. This denial Mill sees as an infringement of the right of self-protection. The exclusion reinforces the laws which keep women subjugated; it is in keeping with the consensus that women shall be cared for and be protected by men, even if, as is the case, the care constitutes nothing but brutal abuses, and the caretakers are those from whom women should be protected.

As Mill shows, there are many precedents to establish the high capabilities and capacities of women; therefore, the problem with most women, even the self-taught, is the narrowness of their education. But even with limited education women have capacities equal or superior to those of many men. It is Mill's opinion that the special attributes which women display: quickness of apprehension, speculative faculty, intuition, among many others, are of great importance to society, and would greatly complement the deficiency in "much taught" men who are often lacking in appreciation of present fact, having been told what to expect, and therefore unlikely to apprehend facts for themselves. In order to further substantiate his elaborate but just claim for women's abilities, Mill cites his own experience with a superior woman as testimony for what women can offer to men who are appreciative of equality in women. It is not just that Mill feels the need to justify women's capacities. He believes that any intelligent and free-thinking man cannot escape knowledge of what women even in their limited sphere have achieved, and what potential lies in them. Mill's dominant concern is to expose the evils involved in excluding women from the freedom of self-determination, and one thing

that irks him as much as all the other injuries to women is the fact that women cannot even engage in the emancipation movement unless their husbands approve. He says that,

> a woman who joins in any movement which her husband disapproves, makes herself a martyr, without even being able to be an apostle, for the husband can legally put a stop to her apostleship. Women cannot be expected to devote themselves to the emancipation of women, until men in considerable number are prepared to join with them in the undertaking.[57]

Mill's premise of equality which implies shared relationships and voluntary association leads directly to the question of the benefits to society from the proposed changes in "our customs and institutions." Mill asserts that the changes for married women in the alleviation of suffering and the gross disabilities of all sorts are too numerous to mention. The point is that power cannot be checked in those who abuse power; the power must be removed. Mill wishes to see injustice replaced by justice because only then will women have the freedom to become equal with men. The principal benefits as Mill sees them are universal justice, and a doubling of the mass of mental faculties. This change in status would mean equal opportunity for the highest attainment in education, a most desirable goal, and one that could be achieved first, by raising women's educational level to that of men, second, "by making the one participate in all the improvements made in the other," and third, by breaking the sex barrier.

The social consequence to women of improved education, Mill sees

as invaluable. But he is also conscious of the harmful effects of a restricted education. He apologises for having to speak of the disadvantage which women with narrow education are to society and to their families. He accuses them of meddling in charitable and other benevolent causes, often doing more harm than good because of their tendency to encourage dependency, being themselves dependent. The point is, then, that Mill respects the dignity of the individual and regards any attempt to make him dependent on another individual, or on an institution, or on society, as an encroachment of his right to independence, to human dignity, and to freedom of choice. This is one reason why Mill thinks it of the greatest importance to give women freedom to develop their full potential. For since they already have such influence, it is imperative that it should be the right kind of influence. His conclusion is, therefore, that anyone who restricts the exercise of personal freedom,

> dries up pro tanto the principal fountain of happiness and leaves the species less rich, to an inappreciable degree, in all that makes life invaluable to the individual human being.[58]

The last word on this descriptive analysis of The Subjection must come from Michael St. John Packe whose summary of this work is a worthy and most appropriate criticism of the text. Packe, speaking of Mill's publication of the work, says that

> it was, like all his works, exhaustive, tracing the dominance of man from the rough dawn of history to the smoother methods of the present day. Carefully

and clearly it exposed the disadvantages of women in each of the great circus rings of life where every human being must perform, education, work, and home. It attacked the matter philosophically, examining the corrosive force of power both on the subject and still more upon her master. And, typically, it attacked the opposition on its strongest as well as on its weakest ground. It mentioned, but did not linger on, the brutal and the base: it challenged the texture of even the most perfect union under the conventions then prevailing.[59]

CHAPTER FOUR

CRITICISM OF THE SUBJECTION OF WOMEN

The publication of The Subjection of Women aroused so much antagonism that it might well be regarded as John Stuart Mill's definitive and most controversial masterpiece on the cause of women, and on relations in society. His opponents were not only among hard-line conservatives but also dissenters from the ranks of the liberals and radicals; even more incensed were a majority of women who saw Mill's treatise as a disturbance to the comfortable state of things with which they were well satisfied. Many opponents saw Mill as a madman; others regarded him as a reprobate whose design was to corrupt society and topple the whole existent fabric from its stability and comfort. Others accused him of sophism, while many plainly regarded his argument as not even worthy of consideration; but still they found it impossible to refrain from offering some form of criticism of specific sore points such as the question of equality in marriage, freedom of occupation, or Mill's failure to indulge their curiosity with his explicit views on divorce. Even Mill's friends were at a

loss to know how to respond to this very damning and explicit document on the state of subjection of one half of the human race. Both in the nineteenth century and in our time, the criticisms of The Subjection have ranged from personal attacks on Mill's morals and sensibilities to attacks on his abilities as moral philosopher and reformer.

One eminent critic, Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, the hardened Conservative, judge, jurist, historian, and hater of democracy, in Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, declares emphatically, at the beginning of his exposition on Mill, that he dissents "from the first sentence to the last" of The Subjection, as from almost everything else he has read of Mill's.[1] For his point of departure, he takes Mill's views that "equality is expedient," and that any case of inequality leaves the burden of proof on those who justify its maintenance. He describes Mill's opinion on the issue of equality as

> the strongest distinct illustration known to me of what is perhaps one of the strongest, and what appears to me to be by far the most ignoble and mischievous of all the popular feelings of the age.[2]

With his qualifications of "perhaps" and "appears" one would assume that Stephen is trying to temper his outrage, but if so, he fails. He continues his attack by asserting that the awareness that the existing generation of women do not dislike their position "embarrasses" Mill at "every turn." He fails to see, however, that Mill was very conscious of fighting an almost losing battle against firmly rooted traditions and especially against many women who were content with

existing conditions. But Mill was not arguing solely against what existed, for he believed that humanity was capable of better than existing laws recognized, therefore, he focussed his attention on what the law allowed and its potential for great evil should men decide to put their power to the test. But, Stephen's dissent was formidable, and he was determined to demolish Mill's theory of equality at all costs. Being at a loss for sufficient solid ground from which to continue his attack, he resorts to a moral premise, and dismisses the whole of Mill's argument as not worthy of consideration because of its disagreeable quality, concluding that,

> there is something--I hardly know what to call it; indecent is too strong a word, but I may say unpleasant in the direction of decorum--in prolonged and minute discussions about the relations between men and women, and the characteristics of women as such.[3]

Mill was not attacked solely for his alleged moral impropriety. His opponents disliked his use of facts and the conclusions drawn from them. Thus Stephen finds Mill's theory of equality unsound in its view of history and of morals, and in particular, in its "grotesquely distorted view of facts." To him, Mill's idea of equality would be as injurious in its practical application as its theory is false. But this merely implies that he does not regard the law in as positive a light as Mill, for his anti-democratic ideas preclude any consideration of the law as a means of adjusting inequalities. In this regard, Stephen states that "to establish by law rights and duties which assume that people are equal when they

are not is like trying to make clumsy feet look handsome by the help of tight boots."[4] His example shows clearly the distance that exists between himself and Mill. Stephen has no feelings or consideration for the poor, or for the disadvantaged masses under laws which operate mainly for the rich. The laws of marriage are an example; only the rich could obtain a token separation, a thing well out of the reach of the average person.

Stephen's view of the indissolubility of marriage rests on a low and degrading view of the kind of conditions to which he would have women stoop. But unfortunately, he has much support for his views, from those whom Mill regarded as the victims. Stephen advocates that marriage should be indissoluble because women lose their qualities attractive to men very early in life, and the inability to get a divorce protects women from being discarded. There is much truth in this statement but Stephen is overlooking the fact that this protection is of use only so long as she remains in her subject state. An independent and educated woman would want to remain attractive for herself as well as for her husband. But in the event of a breakdown in the marriage relationship she would not have to resort to physical arts to be kept. Moreover it must be as degrading for the man, as for the woman, if he no longer loves her and is forced to endure her like a millstone around his neck. So long as she has no recourse she is forced, as Stephen says, to renounce, on marriage, all other occupations but that of serving her husband. Stephen, like all die-hard conservatives, holds that marriage is a

union requiring subordination and submission of the weaker to the stronger, the very issue which Mill attacks so vehemently. Stephen reveres the existent marriage laws as being good, and believes people obey them and are happy because they are good. He is intimidated, therefore, by any suggestion of change, which to him merely threatens the order of things. On the question of submission of wives in marriage, he grudgingly makes one concession, for which he must be given some credit, for although he believes his conservative views to be "right and true," he adds that,

> I freely admit that in many particulars the stronger party has in this, as in other cases, abused his strength, and made rules for his supposed advantage, which in fact are greatly to the injury of both parties. It is needless to say anything in detail of the stupid coarseness of the laws about the effects of marriage on property, laws which might easily be replaced by a general statutory marriage settlement analogous to those which every prudent person makes who has anything to settle. As to acts of violence against women, by all means make the law on this be as severe as it can be made without defeating itself. As to throwing open to women the one or two employments from which they are at present excluded, it is rather a matter of sentiment than of practical importance.[5]

But the education of women is indeed a matter of great practical importance. This is one of the most important premises of The Subjection. It stands to reason, however, that Stephen, who is so rigid in his views, would find it hard to allow this most vital of women's needs, the freedom for self-development, or any criticism of the law which hinders this freedom, because he believes that "the administration of justice in this country [England] is singularly pure."[6] He can make such a statement, even after all the injustices Mill has

depicted and his own admission of unjust laws, because he is determined to prove Mill's views wrong, though it involves the risk of self-contradiction. In this spirit, then, he continues to show that "men are fundamentally unequal and this inequality will show itself, arrange society as you like."[7] Since relations are naturally fixed, according to his view, it is useless to attempt to make changes because the hierarchy of force will always determine relations between human beings. But even if it is true that force will always be the deciding factor, whether through threat or actual application, must the advantage be always on one side? Mill would say no because he does not agree with this view of determining natural processes. Stephen, however, will not be swayed from his path, so his conclusion is as expressed at the beginning; he rejects the whole of Mill's argument. And on the vital issue of distribution of political power, he is adamant that democracy and universal suffrage are social evils, for he maintains that one can change the form of government but not its nature. He contends therefore that the "wise and good man ought to rule those who are foolish and bad."[8] This is a trite remark because it does not follow that the existing class system of rule sets all "wise and good" upper-class men over all "foolish and bad" lower, class men. Moreover, though there are adequate proportions of both types in each class, yet the lower classes and all women are not allowed to rule. Stephen's claim to superiority is quite different from that of Mill, whose virtues can be achieved through opportunity, education, and cultivation, while Stephen's is exclusive and im-

penetrable.

Another severe critic of The Subjection, is Sir Henry Taylor, K.C.M.G., D.C.L., poet, dramatist, member of the Colonial Office, and old acquaintance of Mill from the London Debating Society days. He is a self-proclaimed sceptic, who turns out to be anything but a sceptic, and he uses his assumed scepticism as a cloak to shelter his ultra-conservatism. Playing the game of sceptic, in his Fraser's article "Mr. Mill on the Subjection of Women," he announces his neutrality, then proceeds to give his approval of The Subjection, and of Mill who uses "language of confidence and conclusiveness . . . as belonging to the art of advocacy, dictating, for the movement and for the purpose, its own limitations to the reach and scope of his philosophical mind."[9] He states further that appeal to popular opinion requires accuracy of language with little or no hesitation. He credits Mill with these qualities, and adds that complex questions of human life and history "must be dealt with in bold, rapid, and decisive handling." Taylor no sooner sets Mill up as the supreme advocate than he declares himself an unworthy opponent, a neutralist desiring to cast his "weak and wavering glances" upon some of Mill's conclusions. As Taylor's strategy unfolds it becomes a play upon words, his dominant choice being the word "natural." He proceeds to show, as does Sir James Stephen, that women are basically inferior to men, and unfit to hold power or superior positions. His ultra-conservative view leaves nothing to the imagination for he systematically dissects the whole of Mill's argument on the subjection of women then concludes with the usual hackneyed clichés about woman's nature. First he states that

the subjection of women based initially on physical strength, derives its principle from the upper classes which founded our common law, rooted it in jurisprudence, and have administered it since "time immemorial." His basic premise is that the weak have always been the natural prey of the strong, be they individuals or nations, and he uses the example of Russia's conquest of Poland to show how one nation's degeneracy becomes the nutrient for another's expansion. The position of women is analogous to this form of oppression, for as he sees it, women's subjection is dictated by the immutable law of nature. He asserts further that as with all conquest the capability and incentive to seize opportunity are essential factors. Opportunities are therefore taken not given, and so far, women have neither the ability nor the initiative to take.

It is hardly worth pursuing Taylor's argument any further for although it follows a systematic pattern, the conclusions are the same basic traditional assumptions about women's weaknesses and their need for protection, their natural place being in the home, their natural function being that of wife and mother, not forgetting the primary function of charming husband's friends and families. The basic assumption is that since nature and custom dictate man's superiority over woman, there can be no superiority or equality relating to the wife. In fact Sir Henry implies that a woman would have to prove to be superior to a man before she could even consider the question of equality. And as for any parliamentary involvement in the affairs of the nation, she is unquestionably unfit for such a role, though her corruptibility makes her somewhat desirable for those candidates

who desire to make good their position through bribery. His final point is therefore that it is useless for Mill to engage in this quest for revolutionary change because,

> nature, which has made men differ from women, and has also made them differ from each other--differ in age, differ in health, in animal spirits, in energy, in personal attractiveness and in intellect, has provided such a school of moral sentiment as could never be found in relations of equality. And nature furthermore, inasmuch as she has given men an imagination susceptible of impressions from birth, rank, wealth, pomp, and circumstance, has provided yet another school of moral sentiment through social and adventitious inequalities.[10]

In these schools of nature women will learn "patience, forbearance, humility, charity, generosity," and also "personal independence," for

> there is in truth, no purer independence than that of the man who, being contented with his own lot, is contented also to recognize superiority in others.[11]

Matthew Browne, a conservative wrapped in liberal clothing, also approaches The Subjection with homage to Mill and with an apology for having to dissent from him. Browne, whose real name was William Brighty Rands (1823-1882), 'the laureate of the nursery,' wrote under the pseudonyms Henry Holbeach and Matthew Browne. The self-taught son of a small-time shopkeeper, he became a jack-of-all-trades, ranging from warehouse clerk, actor, legal clerk, preacher, to prolific author of almost every type of literature. In his article "The Subjection of Women," Contemporary Review, Vol. 14 (1870), he compliments Mill for the rare sense of justice which he brings to the discussion of the position of women, and for his quality of a precious and exceptional

sensibility, which makes his utterance on women's subjection almost an exclamation against a crime. But for Mill the subjection of women is a crime. It is a crime committed by the powers who are supposed to punish crimes and give justice to the citizens. Browne's insincerity soon reveals itself as he simultaneously accuses Mill of shortsightedness and intemperance while declaring that he suffers "deep-seated pain in having to criticize Mill." Browne focuses his criticisms on the last chapter which deals with the intellectual equality of men and women. He criticizes Mill for being sparse and bare and suggests that Mill would say that "he is not bound to more." Mill is indeed not bound to more, for his aim was to stimulate thought and discussion, and there can be no doubt that he succeeded in that purpose. While in the abstract Browne can see no "difference whatever" in both men and women having a voice in the community, he declares that "divine expediency" must carry weight in social and political practice.[12] Divine expediency is applicable only to matters where women are to be judged; because Browne himself takes the place of the divine as he declares on the suitability of women for self-government:

> Representative government is, in my opinion, only a very humble step forward in the path towards true self-government; and considering the gross ignorance of most women, the fact that they are numerically the majority, and the fact that they now are (as they always, in my opinion, will be) "intellectually" the "inferiors" of men, I can well understand the dismay with which the majority of men flinch from the bare idea of giving them votes.[13]

Browne, like Sir Henry Taylor, attacks women's moral depravity as a

factor which makes them unfit for advancement. He claims,

> there are many more considerations besides those which I have mentioned; for instance, the peace of families; the greater openness of average women to bribery in the shape of "influence;" and, not least, the very serious consideration that they may be, as they have been, and are, to some extent, made in obscure ways the instruments of bribery of the least resistible kind.[14]

Browne's condemnation of women is even more blatant as he continues,

> nobody can possibly hold higher opinions of the correctness of the majority of women than the writer of these lines; but if the suffrage were immediately granted to them, I should expect--society being what it is in other respects--that this particular change would be followed in certain circles by particularly intricate forms of collusion and corruption.[15]

Mill would find this discussion an absolute outrage against women, and against everything he was trying to accomplish on their behalf. For let us assume for a moment that women are really guilty of these improprieties, and are in truth as grossly ignorant as Browne suggests, it does not follow that they should be deprived of the opportunity for self-improvement. If men are so pure, which according to Mill they are not, since they are responsible for whatever women have become, should women not be given the same chances to acquire the higher virtues and become better persons both for themselves and better partners for their husbands? Browne as a right-wing liberal is really attacking Mill and others on the "Left" for advocating allegedly false views about certain differences which the progress of civilization has made. He believes that not much has changed and that it is sufficient for advocates of suffrage to content

themselves with the fact that the "ultimate right of control, in other words the power, must rest with that side which takes the responsibility and risk of protecting the other."[16] But Mill does not deny the superiority of man's physical strength; he only wants the order of things to be based on qualities other than physical ones, and not on oppression.

As for the power which women exercise over men, Browne believes that this is effected by seduction, which he heartily approves as the original role of women. Woman is therefore an adornment whose "first duty is to be lovely." Browne is prepared to restrict freedom, to "compel conformity to any ideal," and to protect that ideal since woman as an adornment is an irreplaceable paragon as constant as "hills and stars and seas." He advances the view that a woman's capacity for childbirth is a capacity "endowing her with a second brain, heart, and conscience." It is a most remarkable consideration that a woman in order to be an acceptable and desirable inferior must basically acquire secondary physical and moral organs.

These extremely biased views about women give us an even clearer view of the traditional opinions that Mill had to contend with, and the views of Frederic Harrison, lawyer and author, in Tennyson, Ruskin, Mill: and Other Literary Estimates, give us further examples of the varied reactions to The Subjection. Like Alexander Bain, Mill's friend and biographer, Harrison praises the form of the work, and suggests that it is "in many ways the most eloquent of his works, the most characteristic, and perhaps that which has had the most direct and immediate effect."[17] As to technique, he states that,

> the form is indeed pregnant, and in every sense worthy of a scheme which touches us all home, and reaches so far and wide. It is one of those rare examples of a short treatise on a weighty topic, packed with accumulated thought, and fused with ardent conviction.[18]

Even though Harrison praises Mill and The Subjection profusely, it would be a mistake to regard him as a radical Liberal on the side of Mill and his quest for the social and political advancement of women. For as Harrison sees it, the work must be judged as a "systematic effort to recast the whole form of our domestic, social, and political life."[19] He dissents from Mill on the grounds that Mill's method of depicting the social evils is a "monstrous exaggeration," and that his view that a tremendous revolution is needed to overcome them is a "dangerous delusion." Thus Harrison declares that "The Subjection of Women is a mere hysterical sophism in itself," and that the "remedy proposed to cure it is rank moral and social anarchy."[20] Harrison argues that while Mill has sufficient grounds for most of his assertions, when "calmly judged, and regarded as a serious contribution to sociology, the Subjection of Women partakes of the fanatical extravagance found in Abolitionists, Vegetarians, and Free Lovers." He fears that Mill's solutions to social and political evils will cause the "dissolution of civil and domestic existence as civilization has slowly evolved it."[21]

Here is a hint of rank conservatism, fear of change. Surely the most effective growth in civilization is not necessarily that which has evolved slowly. Have not the efforts of far-sighted men been of great advantage to the progress of civilization? Why should the

progress of women not be advanced as rapidly as possible even if there are only one or two disabilities remaining as Harrison claims? Would not society be further advanced, as Mill claims, if men and women were free to work jointly for the progress of mankind according to their individual capacities? Of course these questions have no relevance for those who are threatened by any possibility of change, or those who hold that women lack high intellectual capacity. Harrison rejects any idea of there having been worthwhile changes in society. Any change in the passage from slavery to freedom has been nothing but a "certain perceptible loss of tenderness, modesty, and charm, and a very marked increase in restlessness, self-assertion and conceit."[22] This is the crux of the matter. There have been changes but to Harrison they have worsened society by destroying his ideals of woman and of feminine virtue, so he objects to any further change lest his whole world should crumble from the stable foundation he believes supports it. Harrison accuses Mill of failing "in his accustomed courage when he shrank from frankly dealing with the problem of Marriage." He suggests that "the truth lies not in equality but in the interdependence of the sexes: not in their identities or similarities but in their heterogeneities and correlations." To Harrison, then, "complement, and not assimilation, is the true function of men and of women."[23] I wonder if the process of assimilation does not involve some degree of complement.

It would seem that Conservatives, Liberals and Radicals alike reacted almost violently to The Subjection of Women. The Scottish logician and psychologist, Alexander Bain, though critical in John Stuart Mill: A Criticism is one of the few sympathetic liberal re-

spondents. He criticizes Mill for assuming that the relations of man and woman could operate on a purely voluntary basis, and for not stating his views on divorce and marriage; but he praises The Subjection of Women as "the most sustained exposition of Mill's life-long theme--the abuses of power."[24] On the first issue of the voluntary relation between man and woman, I see no reason why this kind of relation cannot work between equals, if the parties involved enter the relationship with a firm resolve to be conscious of each other's needs and to work towards fuller relationships based on continued renewal. Of course there are abuses in all human undertakings and there are no guarantees that even voluntary relations will not break down. What Mill desired was the freedom of choice without the added sanction of authority. He was also concerned for those young persons who were forced into marriage by self-interested parents, and who had little or no chance of making a success of their forced union. An added disadvantage was the inability of the woman to escape from a disastrous union. But I doubt whether voluntary relation really meant an illicit relation, because people could make their choice and then follow the conventional ceremony as a way of publicly declaring that choice. This method in opposition to arranged marriages is at least a part of what Mill intended; and of course without the obstacles to divorce.

As for the issue of marriage and divorce, Mill had already made his private statement to Harriet on the subject, but his friends and acquaintances would not have known this, nor would his public. But even without this knowledge, I agree with Mill in his preference to

refrain from elaborating on the issue of marriage and divorce because his concern was with the existing divorce laws and their effect upon women. He said himself that until women had a say in these matters there could not be a satisfactory discussion. Moreover, I believe that Mill had not sufficiently sorted his ideas on the subject for public presentation. Being as systematic as he was, he preferred to omit any full-scale discussion until he had suitable and logical proposals. It was characteristic of Mill to be sure of his conclusions before engaging in extravagant claims. Mill did advocate separation, and he suggested that divorce should be available for those who insist on having their own way in a relationship, for he believed that such persons are unfit to relate with others. Those who are unable to relate as equal partners should also have recourse to divorce.

On the question of women's inferiority to men, one of the issues that affect marital relations, Bain suggests that Mill claims women are physically inferior to men but seems to think that this does not affect their mental powers. I agree wholeheartedly with Mill. If effectiveness of mental powers is dependent on physical size, does it follow that all large men are geniuses and all small men idiots? And what of very tall and strong women, are they idiots or geniuses, and what determines this status?

Another of Mill's friends who shows understanding of The Subjection is Kate Amberley, member of the Women's Suffrage Society, wife of Liberal MP Viscount Amberley (John Russell), and mother of the noted philosopher Bertrand Russell. Both Lord and Lady Amberley

were close friends and disciples of Mill, and both gave active support, personally and financially, to the social reform movements, Kate giving especially to women's educational reform. On January 3, 1869, Lady Amberley had written to a friend declaring her belief in the women's movement, and in everything Mill stood for on the subject of women's rights.[26] A letter of 4 September 1869 in the Amberley Papers records her reaction to The Subjection. It is an ambivalent response, her pleasure being a little dampened by having to discuss openly a subject tabooed in Victorian times. She is nevertheless realistic in her view that the problem must be faced, and she sums up her attitude as follows:

> I was very much pleased with Mill's Subjection of Women, it has made a new epoch in the history of the movement--I wish it could be done without talk, but no reform was ever made without talk & without boring people out at last, & so I suppose we must be discussed & turned inside out for the next 20 years & then law makers will begin to see they had better give in & let us manage our own affairs & keep our own property & be guardian to our own children.[27]

Not all women in Mill's time greeted The Subjection as sympathetically as Lady Amberley. In fact many women were outraged. In an article, "Subjection of Women," Edinburgh Review, 30 (1869),[28] credited to Margaret Oliphant, and one on "Mr. Mill on the Subjection of Women," Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, Vol. 69 (Sept. 1869),[29] attributed to Anne Mozley, author, essayist, reviewer, editor, the authors raged at every statement of Mill's and reasserted the traditional views about women's place, intellect, and nature. In the Edinburgh Review, the author credited Mill with being the only person who has treated

the women question on its "fundamental principles." Otherwise both authors were similar in their rejection of Mill's views on equality and other women's issues. Their basic strategy was to accuse Mill of contradictions, false assertions, and distorting reality. These women who were obvious victims of the system, even after they had had opportunities, could not change their ingrained thoughts and attitudes about themselves. I am not suggesting that women should not accept home life and stay there if this is their desire. What is debasing is the sentimental view these women have of themselves and all other women, and their acceptance of themselves as adornments while rejecting most or all progressive views about women's potential.

The critics of Mill's views on women's rights who lived in both the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries were no less formidable than his contemporaries. Two such notable transitional figures are the eminent psychologist, Sigmund Freud, and Havelock Ellis, philosopher and social reformer. In Ernest Jones' The Life and Works of Sigmund Freud, Freud reveals his extremely conservative views in his criticism of Mill. First he compliments Mill as being "perhaps the man of the century who best managed to free himself from the domination of customary prejudices," then turns to ridicule, stating that Mill "lacked in many matters the sense of the absurd; for example, in that of female emancipation and in the women's question altogether."[30] Freud criticizes Mill for being prudish and ethereal, and for failing to distinguish the significant differences between men and women. But what really incensed Freud was Mill's view that "a married woman could earn as much as her husband." He continues,

> we surely agree that the management of a house, the care and bringing up of children, demand the whole of a human being and almost excludes any earning, even if a simplified household relieve her of dusting, cleaning, cooking, etc. He had simply forgotten all that, like everything else concerning the relationship between the sexes.[31]

Not only does Freud deprecate Mill's opinion on women's rights to economic independence, but he responds with his typically negative psychological attitude, relegating Mill's idea on the subject to a "still-born thought." Freud's opinion about his own wife would surely have struck Mill as the worst form of nauseating patronization, for as Freud sees it,

> if, for instance, I imagined my gentle sweet girl as a competitor it would only end in my telling her, as I did seventeen months ago, that I am fond of her and that I implore her to withdraw from the strife into the calm uncompetitive activity of my home.[32]

It is interesting to observe Freud's attitude towards his wife which is the same to all women. He does not simply discuss with his wife his desire for her to withdraw from competition, he implores her, as one would a naughty, stubborn child, to return to his home, not to her home, or their home. Thus he emphasizes, perhaps unconsciously, her total economic dependence on him. To Freud, then, women would have to lose all their feminine attributes and become like men, before he would accept them, with much regret, in the marketplace. He concludes,

> I believe that all reforming action in law and education would break down in front of the fact that, long before the age at which a man can earn a position in society, Nature has determined woman's destiny through beauty, charm, and sweetness. Law and custom have much to give

> women that has been withheld from them, but the position of women will surely be what it is: in youth an adored darling and in mature years a loved wife.[33]

Unlike Freud who sees only the destruction of the ideal of womanhood in Mill's quest for the economic independence of women, Havelock Ellis, in The Task of Social Hygiene, praises Mill for his contribution to the cause of women. Speaking of The Subjection as a "notable book," he remarks that "Mill's clear vision and feminine sensibilities gave freshness to his observations regarding the condition and capacity of women, while his reputation imparted gravity and resonance to his utterances."[34] Ellis notes further that

> it is now nearly half a century since John Stuart Mill--...wrote his Subjection of Women, and it may undoubtedly be said that since that date no book on this subject published in any country--with the single exception of Bebel's Woman--has been so widely read or so influential. The support of this distinguished and authoritative thinker gave to the woman's movement a stamp of aristocratic intellectuality very valuable in a land where even the finest minds are apt to be afflicted by the disease of timidity, and was doubtless a leading cause of the cordial reception which in England the idea of women's political emancipation has long received among politicians.[35]

Modern critics of The Subjection are no less exacting than those of earlier times. But Kate Millett's article, "The Debate Over Women: Ruskin vs Mill," gives one of the clearest contrasts between opposing minds. Though her article leans toward modern feminist views and their preoccupation with the sexual aspect of this issue, there is much to recommend it as an informative and useful discussion. She effectively shows the difference between the static Conservative mind

and the progressive Radical mind. Millett sees the whole issue of the feminist movement in the nineteenth century as a "sexual revolution" and a contest "between two opposing camps, national and chivalrous," each of them claiming "to have at heart the best interest of both sexes and the larger benefit of society."[36] In a comparison between Mill's Subjection of Women and Ruskin's "Of Queen's Gardens," which she terms "two of the central documents of sexual politics in the Victorian period," Millett shows Mill as representing the "realism of sexual politics," and Ruskin the romance and benign aspect of its myth. She commends Mill for his lucid representation of the actual situation, and Ruskin for "one of the most complete insights obtainable into that compulsive masculine fantasy one might call the official Victorian attitude."[37] The essence of Millett's article is that, through a series of contrasts, between the two figures, she arrives at the basic conclusion that on the issues of women's politics, nature, education, family life, Mill's is the energy and cry of revolution, and Ruskin's the tactfully phrased reaction. Mill wants freedom for women, Ruskin wants them at home, protected like delicate lillies. Basically the sexual revolution is still going on today.

Barbara Caine, another modern feminist, praises Mill, in her article "John Stuart Mill and the English Women's Movement," for his heroic contribution to the cause of women. Caine suggests that Mill "was respected, venerated, even worshipped not only in England, but also in America, France, Germany, Italy and Russia."[38] And I might add Denmark, Switzerland, Poland.[39] She credits The Subjection for its unquestionable position as a major force on the position of women.

She criticizes Mill, however, for what she sees as his unfavourable attitude towards women's participation in the movement, and his lack of interest in earlier activities of women's groups. She discredits Mill's claims for his step-daughter's and his own initial involvements in the movement.[40] Caine continues with a series of accusations against Mill, concluding that his involvement in the suffrage movement was much less than he has been credited for. "He was arbitrary, underhand and dictatorial."[41] Perhaps Mill was all these things, which I certainly doubt, but there is no denying the influence of The Subjection in changing the course of women's history.

One critic who expresses keen appreciation for The Subjection is Josephine Rossi, in her article "Sentiment and Intellect." She suggests that one hundred years have passed since this work was published, yet it stands almost alone as an intellectual analysis of the position of women and an appeal for political action to secure equality of the sexes. Rossi sees Mill as the "solitary male intellectual figure who devoted his efforts to tracing the analogous subjection of women with the historical oppression of other groups.[42] Although Rossi, like other feminists, leans toward a sexist interpretation of the work, she nevertheless has a clear insight into what Mill wanted to accomplish for women. She correctly suggests that the liberation of women in Victorian times "was not thought of in terms of sexual liberation of women in the modern sense."[43] She appreciates Mill as a transitional person who, as "a man of towering intellectual importance to his contemporaries,...stands as a significant figure in the history of ideas, [and] one who straddled the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

and anticipated the twentieth."[44] Rossi regrets the neglect of The Subjection by scholars, and suggests that

> it is a measure of the snail's pace at which the movement toward sex equality has progressed that The Subjection of Women is typically merely cited by title by scholars of Mill, but hardly ever analysed, summarized, or included in collections of his essays on liberty and egalitarianism.[45]

This complaint is indeed legitimate, and one, it is hoped, that will be remedied in the future. For as Rossi so ably states in her summation of The Subjection, this work is both current and universal. It is "grounded in basic libertarian values that ring as true today as then," and it "continues to serve as a resounding affirmation" of women's "right to full equality and a sophisticated analysis of the obstacles that bar their way to it."[46] Another point for the "continuing relevance" of The Subjection, says Rossi, is its intellectual clarity and freedom from the theories and doctrines that have burdened society during the last century: Darwinism, Freudianism, Marxism. Of course, the Marxist doctrine was also striving for equality, liberty, and fraternity between classes; Mill was striving for the same thing between the sexes. According to Rossi, The Subjection has a special ingredient which makes it unique even today; it is that "special blend of compassion and logic and a commitment to the view that liberty cannot exist in the absence of the power to use it."[47]

Many modern critics, like so many of Mill's contemporaries, concern themselves with his lack of a specific declaration on divorce in The Subjection. Josephine Kamm in her book, John Stuart Mill in

Love, claims that The Subjection echoes both Vindication of the Rights of Women, and Appeal of Women. She clearly assesses the salient points of the work but criticizes Mill for shying away from the issue of divorce. To her, "one of the most significant and controversial problems raised, but not resolved, in Subjection was the possibility of divorce."[48] Alan Ryan, in his work J.S. Mill, also expresses the same concern about Mill's neglect of the important issue of divorce. Ryan credits The Subjection with all its qualities as a detailed and specific document, which clearly outlines all the issues it treats. He is disappointed in what he terms Mill's "coolness about sexual issues" in The Subjection, and also about Mill's having hedged on the question of divorce and remarriage.[49] It is typical of modern society to require explicit discussions on sex, but in Victorian society, this subject was unmentionable, and one must accept that Mill went as far as he could legitimately go without indulging in impropriety. And even then, he did not escape the wrath of many friends and opponents who accused him of over-indulgence in his openness about relations between the sexes. Even his language was attacked by many like Frederic Harrison who accused him of including "purple patches" in The Subjection.[50] Mill did not satisfy either his friends or his enemies with his official position on divorce. But his opinion is clearly voiced in his letter of 9 November 1855, to an unidentified correspondent, already quoted in Chapter Two, Note 156, and in that to Professor John Nichol, of Glasgow, August 1869, mentioned in Chapter Two, Note 211, in which Mill states that

> I thought it best not to discuss the questions of marriage and divorce along with that of the equality of women; not only from the obvious inexpediency of establishing a connection in people's minds between the equality, and any particular opinions on the divorce question, but also because I do not think that the conditions of the dissolubility of marriage can be properly determined until women have an equal voice in determining them, nor until there has been experience of the marriage relation as it would exist between equals. Until then I should not like to commit myself to more than the general principle of relief from the contract in extreme cases.[51]

Gertrude Himmelfarb's criticism of The Subjection is important for, among other things, the comparison she makes between Mill's principles of liberty for women and those of the Women's Movement of today. Himmelfarb, in On Liberty and Liberalism: The Case of John Stuart Mill, suggests that Mill was asking for nothing more than what the Liberals have always wanted, and men had already achieved. He wanted to gain freedom for the other deprived half of mankind, with equality as the ultimate goal. In a comparison between the goals for women then and now, Himmelfarb sees vast differences. The women's movement of today, she says, focuses on equality of achievement of results rather than equality of opportunity, and failure results in "legislative decree or administrative fiat." She sees this modern approach as a far cry from Mill's insistence on freedom of choice and free competition. For Mill detested "the determination in advance of the 'proper spheres' of men and women." As Himmelfarb interprets Mill, he argued for complete freedom for each individual man or woman to become more complete individuals. This was indeed Mill's idea of

freedom, but now, the focus is on the "entire class," says Himmelfarb, "the collective body of women."[52] The emphasis is now on numbers, which represent a function of class, not a function of individuals. The common goal of both periods is liberation, but as Himmelfarb determines it, while Mill sought to liberate women in order to release the greatest variety of individuals, the movement today emphasizes search for a commonality--"a shared 'consciousness,' a 'sisterhood' which will promote the common cause against a common enemy."[53]

Himmelfarb is certainly correct in her assessment of Mill's claims for the individual. She is perhaps also right in her judgment of the tendency of today's women's movement toward a collective consciousness. The problem is that, during a period of struggle for any kind of social reform, champions tend to use the methods they believe will give them the best and quickest results. Mill used expedient measures for his causes: he got groups to organize petitions, meetings, form organizations, all in the hope of showing the force of collective opinion without sacrificing individuality. Mill also recognized that it was very difficult to secure and maintain individuality since authority and cooperation were also essential functions of society. It is a contradiction he never quite resolved. The point is that even if the women's movement of today is resorting to collectivity, legislation, and administration to gain freedom for women, these methods might well be a part of the necessary process of the evolution of women's rights, to be attained without the complete sacrifice of individuality.

Wendell Robert Carr, in his introduction to The Subjection, summarizes, most adequately, Mill as revealed through this treatise on the condition of women, and his relation to modern women's movements. Even though Carr criticizes The Subjection for "all its painstaking--if sometimes fallacious--logic," which he does not specify, he is much appreciative of the importance of the work and of the rational philosophical quality of Mill's approach to his subject.[54] Carr's conclusion serves adequately as the compliment that all who appreciate The Subjection would want to give to Mill:

> Though deprived of personal knowledge of the man, we do have the privilege of reading the work that incarnates most luminously his compelling passion, his extraordinary philosophic acumen, his deep fear of uncontrolled power, his rigorous enquiries into feminine character, and his increasing commitment to freedom as the agent of morality. The present-day advocates of women's liberation unquestionably share Mill's passion. It remains to be seen whether they will be persuaded also of the preeminent importance of the qualities by which he tempered it.[55]

Criticism of The Subjection of Women has been wide and varied. It has ranged from personal attacks on the author's morals and sanity, to complete refutation of all his principles. The variety of opinions expressed about women's nature and ability proves conclusively that both Mill and The Subjection were essential to break the barrier that stood between accepted customs and beliefs and the need for progressive social change.

CONCLUSION

The Subjection of Women stands as a lasting memorial to John Stuart Mill, for the vigour and passion with which he pursued the cause of social justice. Mill's efforts have been well rewarded by the fact that his work is acclaimed by feminists today as the most effective document on the position of women. As seen in the preceding chapters, Mill expended a vast amount of energy in his quest for changes in the social status of women. But this particular pursuit was only one of his many ventures on behalf of the disadvantaged classes of England, and of humanity as a whole, since his writings and principles reached far beyond the shores of Great Britain.

In conclusion, the question to be dealt with is whether Mill is the appropriate commentator for the emotional issues he writes about? Two of the most commonly known things about Mill are his early upbringing as a reasoning machine and his awakening in the fall of 1826 to the knowledge that he was devoid of feelings. Since that time Mill came to be known generally as the thinking machine, and much attention has been given to his rational approach, much to the exclusion of any emotional component. On the other hand, those who

disagree with his views on certain of the issues he confronts accuse him of being too emotional. Such was Alexander Bain's response to The Subjection. In John Stuart Mill: A Criticism, Bain states that Mill's "feelings carried him too far"[1] on the women question.

Apart from this exaggeration of Mill's emotional excess, Bain does provide proof that Mill was quite capable of balancing reason and emotion to suit his particular purpose. Bain says,

> not only could he shape arguments to the reason, properly so called, he could also address the feelings. The Liberty and The Subjection of Women, as well as his political writing generally exemplify what might be called impassioned oratory; they leave nothing unsaid that could enlist the strongest feelings of the readers. His best Parliamentary speeches appealed to the understanding and to the feelings alike, and he seldom, so far as I can judge, lost ground for want of suiting himself to a most difficult assembly. Although he could not clothe his feelings in the richness of poetry, he could warm with his subject, and work by the force of sympathy.[2]

Frederic Harrison also testifies to Mill's capacity for feelings when he says that Mill "was a man with a heart of truly feminine sensibility. His heart was even richer than his head."[3] Mill himself gives ample testimony, in his Autobiography, of numerous experiences that touched him deeply, both during early childhood and after his breakdown when he finally learned to cultivate his feelings.

If Mill was so capable of this fine balancing of the faculties, then any remoteness, intellectually or emotionally, must have been deliberately cultivated for his specific purpose. Mill does show a certain lack of perspective in his upper-middle-class attitude towards the lower classes, in his expectations of them. He seems to expect

everyone to rise to his level, and to aspire towards the high ideals he sets for mankind. Perhaps he is unrealistic in his expectations, or perhaps it is just part of his strategy to set goals far beyond the limits of those he wishes to improve, knowing full well that these goals will only be partially achieved. However, Mill's focus on the economic and legal disabilities of women in society was indeed a realistic and logical approach to take in response to these perennial problems. His emphasis on reason gave him the edge in a society which generally considered it admirable to be rational. The mid-Victorians, with their puritanical tendencies, were perfect candidates for Mill's rational appeal, even though Mill did not scruple to invade their most private and sensitive domain, when this was required to stir their sensibilities.

Quite apart from Mill's deficient emotional or superior intellectual disqualifications, if these flaws can truly be ascribed to him, fundamentally what is important about Mill basing his argument on economic and legal grounds is his belief in the law as a positive instrument rather than something arbitrary and incidental to be ignored. Mill's belief in the legal process when correctly applied sets him far above many of his contemporaries who regarded the law merely as an instrument to be manipulated for their own purposes. Another important achievement for Mill is his originality in attacking the family, that bulwark of mid-Victorian stability, thereby forcing the society to look below the surface. Mill himself was a product of what he considered a deficient family life where there was much surface affection but no depth for warm confidential

interchange. This experience may have disqualified him as a spokesman against mid-Victorian superficiality, but it did not. He mastered his childhood handicaps, and rose to challenge the stifling traditions that hindered the growth of genuine closeness in the family and kept women in social, economical, and political bondage.

Mill was extremely successful in reaching his audience. He was equally successful in many of his social reform efforts, and especially in exposing the social disadvantages of women. He has been credited as a man who combined feeling with intellect, who carefully surveyed every fact before arriving at a conclusion. Thus his Subjection of Women has been responsible for directing thought with, what W. Lyon Blease, an advocate of woman's rights, terms in The Emancipation of English Women, 1910, "a new clearness and a new impetus."[4] It has also been responsible for some of the major social changes affecting women, a view supported by Blease who states that

> since its publication, the whole course of the emancipation of women may be traced in an unbroken line down to the present day. It is marked by a great increase in the number of independent organizations--political, industrial, and social; by a growing desire among women to enter employments not merely as a means of earning a subsistence, but as a road to spiritual as well as economic independence; by a gradual removal of their special disabilities by the Legislature; by an improvement in the public standard of morality and a refinement

> of private manners; and by changes in the tone of literature and in social customs.5

Blease continues with an impressive list of dates which show many of the specific changes that occurred between 1869, when The Subjection was first published, and 1910, the publication date of The Emancipation. As Blease shows,

> the advance, slow at first, now almost too rapid for a contemporary to obtain a complete view, has been continuous. Women were allowed to vote at municipal elections in 1869. In 1870 they were made eligible for membership in the new School Boards. In 1875 they sat for the first time on Boards of Guardians. They were permitted to acquire medical qualifications in 1876. The Married Women's Property Acts of 1870 and 1882 protected the earnings and property of wives from the rapacity of their husbands, and a number of statutes have brought legal separation within the reach of those poorer women who most need it. The Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 improved the existing means of protection against sexual offences, and raised the age at which a young girl could consent to her own dishonour from thirteen to sixteen years. In 1886 women were permitted to act as guardians to their own children after the father's death. In 1888 they began to vote for County Councils. The right of the husband to the absolute possession of his wife's body received a serious blow in 1891, when the famous Clitheroe case decided that a husband had no right to carry off his wife by force, or to imprison her until she submitted to his wishes. In 1907 they were admitted to membership of County and Borough Councils, and even to the office of Mayor. Every year has seen a larger interest taken by women in national politics. The Primrose League was founded in 1883, and the Women's Liberal Federation in 1887, and with the growth of their independent political associations the demand for the enfranchisement of women has become more definite and more insistent. In higher education the same development is to be observed. From Ladies' Colleges and Councils of Education the pioneers proceeded in 1871 to found the first of the Colleges at Cambridge. The modern

> Universities have been liberal almost from the first, in so far as liberalism consists in allowing women to attend classes on equal terms with men. All the Universities now admit women to their examinations, and all except Oxford and Cambridge admit them to their degrees. In 1903 and again in 1906 the Inns of Court have refused to call women to the Bar. But in 1910 the Institute of Chartered Accountants, which a few years ago refused to admit a woman to its examinations, is promoting a Bill which will open the profession to both sexes on equal terms. While the Church of England will for some years to come compete with the legal profession for the dubious honours of conservatism, the Nonconformist churches become steadily more liberal, and the Congregationalists and the Unitarians have already fully qualified women ministers. There has been a steady invasion of the Civil Service, as well as of the ordinary industrial employments, and a long series of Acts of Parliament has aimed at improving the conditions of women's labour. Grave defects still exist in the law, and whenever the interests of the two sexes come into conflict, those of men are still very frequently consulted. But striking as the incompleteness of reform may be, if there is one feature of the legislation of the last fifty years which is more marked than its attention to economic problems, it is the steady improvement which it has effected in the condition of women.[6]

This long quotation serves as a fitting summary of some of the changes in the status of women which both Mill's personal influence and his publication of The Subjection have helped to bring about. Even though progress in the condition of women has continued much beyond the level reached in 1910, the pace has been painfully slow in many areas of women's concerns, especially when compared with the rapid progress of other issues and developments in the society. Nevertheless, the continuing interest in The Subjection of Women, and in Mill, a man of thought who took positive actions to remedy one of the greatest social evils of our times, the subjugation of women, not

only affirms Mill's unqualified success in addressing the issue of women's disabilities but adds force to my conviction that Mill indeed deserves to be called the champion of women's rights.

CHAPTER ONE

Notes

[1]Hayek, John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor, p. 75.

[2]Mill, Autobiography, pp. 32-33.

[3]Ibid., p. 33.

[4]Packe, The Life of John Stuart Mill, p. 32.

[5]Bain, James Mill, p. 156.

[6]Packe, p. 32.

[7]Ibid., pp. 32-33.

[8]Mill, Autobiography, p. 33n.

[9]Packe, p. 32.

[10]Place, p. 75.

[11]Ibid., p. 73.

[12]Packe, p. 33.

[13]Mill, Autobiography, p. 33n.

[14]Himmelfarb, On Liberty and Liberalism, pp. 192-93.

[15]Packe, p. 80.

[16]Ibid., p. 109.

[17]Mill, Autobiography, p. 36.

[18]Ibid., pp. 36-37.

[19] Ibid., p. 37.

[20] Packe, p. 74.

[21] Ibid., pp. 322-25.

[22] Mazlish, James and John Stuart Mill, p. 194.

[23] Ibid., p. 195.

[24] Packe, p. 50.

[25] Ibid., pp. 51-52.

[26] Mazlish, p. 194.

[27] Mill, Autobiography, p. 63.

[28] Ibid., p. 64.

[29] Ibid., p. 75.

[30] Lee, "Introduction," Appeal, p. 1.

[31] Ibid., p. 7.

[32] O'Malley, Women in Subjection, pp. 325-26.

[33] Ibid., p. 26.

[34] Ibid., p. 25.

[35] Ibid., p. 26.

[36] Packe, p. 57.

[37] Ibid, p. 57.

[38] Ibid., p. 57.

[39] Ibid., p. 57.

[40] Ibid., pp. 57-58.

[41] Ibid., p. 56.

[42] Mill, Autobiography, p. 35.

[43] Ibid, p. 35.

[44]Himmelfarb, p. 170.

[45]Packe, p. 63.

[46]Nesbitt, Benthamite Reviewing, p. 88.

[47]Carr, "Introduction," The Subjection of Women, p. IX.

[48]Mill, Westminster Review, 1 (1824), 525-26.

CHAPTER TWO

Notes

[1]George L. Nesbitt, Benthamite Reviewing, p. 88.

[2]Ibid., p. 88.

[3]Ibid., p. 88.

[4]Mill, Westminster Review, 1 (1824), 525.

[5]Ibid., p. 526.

[6]Nesbitt, p. 90.

[7]Mill, "Age of Chivalry," Westminster Review, 6 (1826), 95.

[8]Ibid., p. 95.

[9]Ibid., p. 95.

[10]Ibid., p. 95.

[11]Ibid., p. 95.

[12]Nesbitt, p. 90.

[13]Ibid., p. 96.

[14]Mill, Westminster Review, 6 (1826), 97.

[15]Ibid., p. 97.

[16]Mill, "Poetry of L.E.L.," Westminster Review, 7 (1827), 54.

[17]Ibid., p. 66.

[18] Ibid., p. 66.

[19] Ibid., p. 67.

[20] Nesbitt, p. 91.

[21] F.A. Hayek, John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor, pp. 57-78.

[22] Ibid., p. 58.

[23] Ibid., p. 60.

[24] Ibid., p. 61.

[25] Ibid., p. 59.

[26] Ibid., p. 59.

[27] Ibid., p. 60.

[28] Ibid., p. 60.

[29] Ibid., p. 62.

[30] Ibid., pp. 62-3.

[31] Ibid., p. 63.

[32] Ibid., p. 63.

[33] Ibid., p. 63.

[34] Ibid., p. 64.

[35] Ibid., p. 64.

[36] Ibid., p. 64.

[37] Ibid., p. 65.

[38] Ibid., p. 67.

[39] Ibid., p. 67.

[40] Ibid., p. 69.

[41] Ibid., p. 70.

[42] Ibid., p. 71.

[43] Ibid., p. 72.

[44] Ibid., p. 72.

[45] Ibid., p. 73.

[46] Ibid., p. 74.

[47] Ibid., p. 75.

[48] Mill, "Employment of Children in Manufactories," Examiner, p. 67.

[49] Ibid., p. 67.

[50] "The Female Operative of Todmorden," Examiner, p. 131.

[51] Mill, Examiner, p. 131.

[52] Mill, Earlier Letters, Mineka, p. 175.

[53] Ibid., p. 184.

[54] Mill, "St. Simonism in London," Examiner, p. 68.

[55] Ibid., p. 69.

[56] Ibid., p. 69.

[57] Ibid., p. 69.

[58] Ibid., p. 69.

[59] Mill, Earlier Letters, Mineka, p. 352.

[60] Ibid., pp. 352-53.

[61] Ibid., p. 352.

[62] Ibid., p. 352.

[63] Packe, p. 276.

[64] Ibid., p. 278.

[65] Mill, Dissertations and Discussions, 2, p. 165.

[66] Ibid., p. 263.

[67]Packe, p. 295.

[68]Mill, Earlier Letters, Mineka, p. 740.

[69]Ibid., p. 741.

[70]Ibid., p. 741.

[71]Mill, Later Letters, Mineka, p. 12.

[72]Ibid, pp. 12-13.

[73]Ibid., p. 13.

[74]Ibid., p. 15.

[75]Ibid., p. 26.

[76]Ibid., pp. 44-45.

[77]Ibid., p. 45.

[78]Mill, Morning Chronicle, 13 March, 1850, p. 5.

[79]Ibid., p. 5.

[80]Ibid., p. 5.

[81]Ibid., p. 5.

[82]Mill, Morning Chronicle, 26 March, 1850, p. 4.

[83]Ibid., p. 5.

[84]Ibid., p. 5.

[85]Mill, Morning Chronicle, 29 March, 1850, p. 4.

[86]Ibid., p. 4.

[87]Ibid., p. 4.

[88]Mill, Morning Chronicle, 31 May, 1850, p. 4.

[89]Ibid., p. 5.

[90]Mill, Morning Chronicle, 28 August, 1851, p. 4.

[91]Mill, Later Letters, Mineka, p. 48.

[92]Ibid., p. 49.

[93] Ibid., p. 49.

[94] Ibid., pp. 55-56.

[95] Mill, Elliot Letters, 1, pp. 158-59.

[96] Mill, Later Letters, Mineka, pp. 61-62.

[97] Ibid., p. 63.

[98] Ibid., pp. 63-64.

[99] Ibid., p. 64.

[100] Ibid., p. 64.

[101] Ibid., p. 64.

[102] Ibid., p. 64.

[103] Ibid., p. 66.

[104] Ibid., p. 66.

[105] Mill, Dissertations and Discussions, Vol. 2, pp. 411-49. This article has been variously attributed to Harriet Taylor Mill, and Mill himself has given her credit for it. The fact that Mill did not mention Harriet's contribution in his correspondence with Hickson on the proposed article and its naming makes me inclined to treat the document as Mill's with Harriet as co-author, or as Mill puts it, a "joint production."

[106] See notes 92 and 93. Letter to Harriet Taylor, October 29, 1850.

[107] Mill, Dissertations and Discussions, 2, p. 413.

[108] Ibid., p. 413.

[109] Ibid., p. 415.

[110] Ibid., p. 416.

[111] Ibid., p. 417.

[112] Ibid., p. 417.

[113] Ibid., p. 418.

[114] Ibid., p. 418.

[115] Ibid., p. 419.

[116] Ibid., p. 420.

[117] Ibid., p. 420.

[118] Ibid., p. 422.

[119] Ibid., p. 422.

[120] Ibid., p. 423.

[121] Ibid., p. 424.

[122] Ibid., p. 428n.

[123] Ibid., pp. 431-32.

[124] Ibid., p. 432.

[125] Ibid., p. 432.

[126] Ibid., p. 435.

[127] Ibid., p. 435.

[128] Ibid., p. 438.

[129] Ibid., pp. 439-40.

[130] Ibid., p. 445.

[131] Ibid., p. 446.

[132] Ibid., pp. 448-49.

[133] Ibid., pp. 447-48.

[134] Packe, p. 347.

[135] Mill, Later Letters, Mineka, pp. 87-89. "Green's articles have not been located," but he was the author of a pamphlet, "The Deccan Ryots and their Land Tenure," for the Bombay Gazette. (Gazette Press, Bombay, 1852).

[136] Ibid., pp. 88-89.

[137] Ibid., p. 89.

[138] Mill, Elliot Letters, I, pp. 173-75.

[139] Ibid., p. 175.

[140] Mill, Later Letters, Mineka, p. 147.

[141] Mill, Elliot Letters, 2, p. 357.

[142] Ibid., p. 357.

[143] Ibid., p. 375.

[144] Ibid., p. 375.

[145] Ibid., p. 375.

[146] Ibid., pp. 375-76.

[147] Ibid., p. 382.

[148] Ibid., p. 382.

[149] Ibid., p. 382.

[150] Ibid., p. 383.

[151] Ibid., p. 383.

[152] Mill, Later Letters, Mineka, p. 196.

[153] Ibid., pp. 196-97.

[154] Ibid., p. 197.

[155] Ibid., p. 202.

[156] Ibid., p. 500.

[157] Ibid., p. 557.

[158] Ibid., p. 558.

[159] Ibid., pp. 599-600.

[160] Mill, Dissertations and Discussions, 3, pp. 2-46.

[161] Ibid., p. 28.

[162] Ibid., p. 28.

[163] Ibid., p. 37.

[164] Ibid., pp. 39-40.

[165]Packe, p. 446.

[166]Ibid., p. 446.

[167]Ibid., p. 447.

[168]Ibid., p. 448.

[169]Ibid., p. 449.

[170]Mill, Elliot Letters, 2, p. 23.

[171]Ibid., p. 33.

[172]Ibid., pp. 16-17.

[173]Ibid., p. 39.

[174]Ibid., p. 61.

[175]Ibid., p. 61.

[176]Ibid., p. 61.

[177]Ibid., p. 61.

[178]Ibid., p. 62.

[179]Ibid., pp. 79-80.

[180]Ibid., p. 80.

[181]Packe, p. 492.

[182]Ibid., p. 492.

[183]Mill, Hansard, 187: 817.

[184]Mill, Elliot Letters, 2, p. 81.

[185]Mill, Later Letters, Mineka, p. 1278.

[186]Ibid., p. 1346.

[187]Ibid., pp. 1345-46.

[188]Ibid., pp. 1343-44.

[189]Ibid., p. 1284.

[190]Ibid., p. 1289.

[191] Ibid., p. 1284n4.

[192] Packe, p. 473.

[193] Mill, Elliot Letters, 2, p. 142.

[194] Ibid., pp. 149-50.

[195] Ibid., p. 157.

[196] Ibid., p. 157.

[197] Ibid., p. 172.

[198] Packe, p. 494.

[199] Ibid., p. 494.

[200] Ibid., p. 495.

[201] Stephen, p. 220.

[202] Ibid., p. 222.

[203] Blackwood's Magazine, 69 (1869), 310.

[204] Harrison, p. 291.

[205] Bain, p. 310.

[206] Packe, p. 495.

[207] Russell, Amberley Papers, 2, p. 282.

[208] Packe, pp. 495-96.

[209] Harrison, pp. 289-90.

[210] Mill, Elliot Letters, 2, p. 209.

[211] Ibid., pp. 210-12.

[212] Ibid., pp. 212-13.

[213] Ibid., pp. 213-14.

[214] Mill, Later Letters, Mineka, pp. 1750-51.

[215] Ibid., p. 1642.

[216] Ibid., pp. 1647-48.

[217] Ibid., pp. 1657-58.

[218] Mill, Elliot Letters, 2, p. 233.

[219] Ibid., p. 234.

[220] Ibid., pp. 239-42.

[221] Ibid., pp. 238-39.

[222] Ibid., pp. 287-290.

[223] Packe, p. 501.

[224] Ibid., p. 502.

[225] Ibid., p. 502.

[226] Ibid., p. 503.

[227] Mill, Elliot Letters, 2, pp. 254-55.

[228] Ibid., p. 303.

[229] Mill, Later Letters, Mineka, pp. 1829-30.

[230] Mill, Elliot Letters, 2, pp. 310-12.

[231] Ibid., p. 330.

[232] Ibid., p. 249.

[233] Ibid., p. 349.

[234] Ibid., p. 349.

[235] Packe, p. 500.

[236] Ibid., p. 500.

[237] Ibid., p. 484.

[238] Ibid., p. 500n.

CHAPTER THREE

Notes

[1] John Stuart Mill, The Subjection of Women, hereafter referred to as The Subjection, p. 41.

[2] Ibid., pp. 43-44.

[3] Ibid., p. 1.

[4] Ibid., p. 2.

[5] Ibid., pp. 2-3.

[6] Ibid., p. 5.

[7] Ibid., pp. 7-8.

[8] Ibid., pp. 8-9.

[9] Ibid., pp. 9-10.

[10] Ibid., pp. 19-20.

[11] Ibid., p. 21.

[12] Ibid., pp. 26-27.

[13] Ibid., pp. 27-28.

[14] Ibid., p. 35.

[15] Ibid., pp. 35-36.

[16] Ibid., p. 36.

[17]Ibid., p. 37.

[18]Ibid., p. 37.

[19]Ibid., p. 38.

[20]Ibid., p. 38.

[21]Ibid., p. 39.

[22]Ibid., p. 39.

[23]Millet, Suffer and Be Still, p. 127.

[24]Mill, The Subjection, p. 48.

[25]Ibid., pp. 48-49.

[26]Ibid., p. 49.

[27]Ibid., pp. 49-50.

[28]Ibid., p. 51.

[29]Ibid., p. 51.

[30]Ibid., p. 52.

[31]Vicinus, "Introduction": The Widening Sphere, p. IX.

[32]Mill, The Subjection, p. 54.

[33]Ibid., p. 55.

[34]Ibid., p. 55.

[35]Ibid., p. 60.

[36]Ibid., p. 65.

[37]Ibid., p. 66.

[38]Ibid., pp. 66-67.

[39]Ibid., p. 70.

[40]Ibid., p. 70.

[41]Ibid., p. 69.

[42] Ibid., p. 73.

[43] Ibid., p. 74.

[44] Ibid., pp. 76-77.

[45] Ibid., p. 77.

[46] Ibid., pp. 77-78.

[47] Ibid., p. 78.

[48] Ibid., p. 79.

[49] Ibid., p. 79.

[50] Ibid., p. 80.

[51] Ibid., p. 81.

[52] Ibid., p. 81.

[53] Hughes, Canadian Journal of Political Science, 12 (1979), 533.

[54] Feaver, Canadian Journal of Political Science, 12 (1979), 549.

[55] Mill, The Subjection, pp. 89-90.

[56] Ibid., pp. 91-92.

[57] Ibid., p. 145.

[58] Ibid., p. 188.

[59] Packe, p. 494.

CHAPTER FOUR

Notes

[1]Stephen, p. 220.

[2]Ibid., p. 220.

[3]Ibid., p. 222.

[4]Ibid., p. 224.

[5]Ibid., pp. 235-36.

[6]Ibid., p. 246.

[7]Ibid., p. 251.

[8]Ibid., p. 259.

[9]Taylor, Fraser's Magazine, 1 (1870), 143.

[10]Ibid., p. 164.

[11]Ibid., p. 164.

[12]Browne, Contemporary Review, 14 (1870), 275.

[13]Ibid., p. 275.

[14]Ibid., p. 275.

[15]Ibid., p. 275.

[16]Ibid., p. 275.

[17]Harrison, p. 289.

[18] Ibid., p. 289.

[19] Ibid., p. 291.

[20] Ibid., p. 291.

[21] Ibid., p. 292.

[22] Ibid., p. 295.

[23] Ibid., p. 296.

[24] Bain, p. 130.

[25] Ibid., p. 131.

[26] Russell, Amberley Papers, 2, pp. 298-300.

[27] Ibid., p. 282.

[28] Butler, Edinburgh Review, 130 (1869), 572-602.

[29] Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 69 (Sept. 1869), 309-21.

[30] Freud, Life and Work, p. 167.

[31] Ibid., pp. 167-68.

[32] Ibid., p. 168.

[33] Ibid., p. 168.

[34] Ellis, p. 52.

[35] Ibid., p. 71.

[36] Millett, p. 121.

[37] Ibid., p. 122.

[38] Caine, p. 52.

[39] Stanton, Woman Question in Europe, pp. 233, 378, 422, 433.

[40] Caine, p. 53.

[41] Ibid., p. 57.

[42] Rossi, p. 5.

[43] Ibid., p. 49.

[44] Ibid., p. 5.

[45] Ibid., p. 5.

[46] Ibid., pp. 58-59.

[47] Ibid., p. 59.

[48] Kamm, p. 197.

[49] Ryan, pp. 54-56.

[50] Harrison, p. 292.

[51] Mill, Elliot Letters, 2, p. 212.

[52] Himmelfarb, p. 174.

[53] Ibid., p. 175.

[54] Carr, "Introduction," The Subjection of Women, p. xxii.

[55] Ibid., pp. xxviii-xxix.

CONCLUSION

Notes

[1]Bain, p. 184.

[2]Ibid., p. 184.

[3]Harrison, p. 292.

[4]Blease, p. 120.

[5]Ibid., p. 120.

[6]Ibid., pp. 120-123.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Bibliography

Hayek, F.A. John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor: Their Friendship and Subsequent Marriage. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951.

Mill, John Stuart. Autobiography. With preface by John Jacob Coss. New York: Columbia University Press, 1924.

----------. Dissertations and Discussions. Vols. 1-2, London: Parker 1859; Vol. 3, London: Longmans, 1867; Vol. 4, London: Longmans, 1875.

----------. The Earlier Letters of John Stuart Mill, 1812-1848. Ed. Francis E. Mineka. Vols. 12-13 of Collected Works. Toronto: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972.

----------. "Employment of Children in Manufactories," Examiner, 29 Jan. 1832, pp. 67-68.

----------, Harriet Taylor Mill. Essays on Sex Equality. Ed. with Introductory Essay, Alice S. Rossi. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1970.

----------. "Further Inquiry Into the Principles of Population: The Natural Pressure Against the Means of Subsistence, a Wholesome Stimulus to Extend them,--their Elastic Nature & C. & C." Black Dwarf 12 (Feb. 4, 1824), 143-49.

----------. The Later Letters of John Stuart Mill, 1849-1873. Ed. Francis E. Mineka and Dwight N. Lindley, Vols. 14-17 of Collected Works. Toronto: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972.

----------. "A Leading Article on the Bideford Case," Morning Chronicle, 26 Mar. 1850, pp. 4-5.

----------. "A Leading Article on the Coroner's Inquest of Susan Mori," Morning Chronicle, 29 Mar. 1850, p. 4.

----------. "A Leading Article on Some Cases of Wife Murder," Morning Chronicle, 28 August, 1851, p. 4.

----------. "A Leading Article on the State of the Law Respecting Assault," Morning Chronicle, 13 Mar. 1850, p. 5.

----------. "A Leading Article on the State of the Law of Assault," Morning Chronicle, 31 May, 1850, pp. 4-5.

----------. The Letters of John Stuart Mill: Ed. Hugh S.R. Elliot. 2 Vols. London: Longmans, 1910.

----------. "Modern French Historical Works:--Age of Chivalry." Westminster Review, 6 (July, 1826), 62-103.

----------. "Occupation Franchise for Voters in Counties: Representation of the People Bill," (3 Hansard, 187: 817-29), 1867.

----------. "A Paragraph in Answer to a Letter From the Female Operatives of Todmorden: To the Editor of the Examiner," Examiner, 2 Feb. 1832, p. 131.

----------. "Periodical Literature:--Edinburgh Review." Westminster Review, 1 (April, 1824), 505-41.

----------. "Poetry of L.E.L." Westminster Review, 7 (Oct., 1826-Jan., 1827), 55-57.

----------. "St. Simonism in London," Examiner, 2 Feb., 1834, pp. 67-68.

----------. The Subjection of Women. London: Longmans, 1869.

Packe, Michael St. John. The Life of John Stuart Mill. London: Secker and Warburg, 1954.

Stillinger, Jack, ed. The Early Draft of John Stuart Mill's Autobiography. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1961.

Secondary Bibliography

Bain, Alexander. James Mill: A Biography. New York: Kelly, 1967.

----------. John Stuart Mill: A Criticism: With Personal Recollections. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1882.

Blackburn, Helen. Women's Suffrage. London: Williams and Northgate, 1971, 309-21.

Blease, W. Lyon. The Emancipation of English Women. London 1910; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1971.

Browne, Matthew. "The Subjection of Women," Contemporary Review, 14 (1870), 273-286.

Butler, Josephine ed. "Mill on the Subjection of Women." Edinburgh Review, 130 (1869), 572-602.

Caine, Barbara. "John Stuart Mill and the English Women's Movement." Historical Studies, 18 (April, 1978), 52-67.

Carr, Wendall Robert, Introd. The Subjection of Women. By John Stuart Mill. London, England: The M.I.T. Press, 1970.

Ellis, Havelock. The Task of Social H giene. London, Constable, 1927.

Feaver, George. "Comment: Overcoming His-story? Ms. Hughes's Treatment of Mr. Mill," Canadian Journal of Political Science, 12 (Sept., 1979), 543-54.

Froude, James Anthony. Thomas Carlyle: A History of the First Forty Years of His Life: 1795-1835. New York: Scribner's Sons, 1882.

Harrison, Frederic. Tennyson, Ruskin, Mill and Other Literary Estimates. London: Macmillan, 1902.

Himmelfarb, Gertrude. On Liberty and Liberalism: The Case of John Stuart Mill. New York: Knopf, 1974.

Houghton, Walter. The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957.

Hughes, Patricia. "The Reality Versus the Ideal: J.S. Mill's Treatment of Women, Workers, and Private Property." Canadian Journal of Political Science, 12 (Sept., 1979), 523-42.

Jones, Ernest. The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud. Ed. Lionel Trilling and Steven Marcus. New York: Penguin, 1977.

Kamm, Josephine, John Stuart Mill in Love. London: Gordon and Cremonesi, 1977.

MacMinn, Ney., J.R. Hainds, and James McNab McCrimmon, eds. Bibliography of the Published Writings of John Stuart Mill. New York: AMS Press, 1970.

Mazlish, Bruce. James and John Stuart Mill: Father and Son in the Nineteenth Century. New York: Basic Books, 1975.

Millett, Kate. "The Debate Over Women: Ruskin vs Mill." Suffer and Be Still. Ed. Martha Vicinus, London: Indiana University Press, 1972, p. 127.

"Mr. Mill on The Subjection of Women." Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 69, No. 647 (Sept., 1869), 309-21.

Neff, Emery. Carlyle and Mill. 2nd edition. New York: Columbia University Press, 1926.

Nesbitt, George L. Benthamite Reviewing: The First Twelve Years of The Westminster Review. New York: AMS Press, 1934; rpt. 1966.

O'Malley, I.B. Women in Subjection: A Study of the Lives of Englishwomen before 1832. London: Duckworth, 1933.

Pappe, H.O. John Stuart Mill and the Harriet Taylor Myth. Melbourne, 1960; U.P. for the Australian National University: Melbourne University Press, 1961.

Robson, John M. The Improvement of Mankind: The Social and Political Thought of John Stuart Mill. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968.

Rossi, Alice S. "Sentiment and Intellect." Essays on Sex Equality: John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor Mill. ed. Alice S. Rossi, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1970, pp. 1-64.

Rover, Constance. Women's Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain 1866-1914. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967.

Ruskin, John. Sesame and Lillies, The Two Paths and The King of the Golden River. London: Dent, 1865.

Russell, Bertrand and Patricia, eds. The Amberley Papers: The Letters and Diaries of Lord and Lady Amberley. 2 Vols. London: Hogarth Press, 1937.

Ryan, Alan. J.S. Mill. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974.

Spencer, Herbert. The Study of Sociology. New York: Appleton, 1893.

Stanton, Theodore. The Woman Question in Europe. London: G.P. Putnams Sons, 1884.

Stephen, Sir James Fitzjames, bart., Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1874.

Strachey, Ray. The Cause: A Short History of the Women's Movement in Great Britain. London: 1928 rpt. New York: Kennikat Press, 1969.

Taylor, Sir Henry, "Mr. Mill on The Subjection of Women," Fraser's Magazine, 1 (February 1870), 143-165.

Thompson, E.P. The Making of the English Working Class. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1963.

Thompson, William. The Appeal of Women. London: Longman, 1825.

Vicinus, Martha, ed. Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age. London: Indiana University Press, 1972.

----------. A Widening Sphere: Changing Roles of Victorian Women. London: Indiana University Press, 1977.

Wallas, Graham. The Life of Francis Place: 1771-1854. London: Allen and Unwin, 1898; new edition 1918; rpt. 1951.

Wollstonecraft, Mary. The Rights of Women, and John Stuart Mill, The Subjection of Women. London: Dent, 1929.